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RENAISSANCE IN ITALY

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RENAISSANCE IN ITALY

THE CATHOLIC REACTION

IN TWO PARTS

BY

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

AUTHOR OF

'STUDIES OF THE GREEK POETS' 'SKETCHES IN ITALY AND GREECE'

ETC.

'Il mondo invecchia
E invecchiando intristisce'
TASSO: *Aminta*, Act 2, sc.

PART II.

NEW EDITION

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In a previous portion of this work, I attempted to define the Italian Romantic Epic, and traced the tale of Orlando from Pulci through Boiardo and Ariosto to the burlesque of Folengo. There is an element of humour more or less predominant in the 'Morgante Maggiore,' the 'Orlando Innamorato,' and the 'Orlando Furioso.' This element might almost be regarded as inseparable from the species. Yet two circumstances contributed to alter the character of Italian Romance after the publication of the 'Furioso.' One of these was the unapproachable perfection of that poem. No one could hope to surpass Ariosto in his own style, or to give a fresh turn to his

humour without passing into broad burlesque. The romantic poet had therefore to choose between sinking into parody with Folengo and Aretino, or soaring into the sublimities of solemn art. Another circumstance was the keen interest aroused in academic circles by Trissino's unsuccessful epic, and by the discussion of heroic poetry which it stimulated. The Italian nation was becoming critical, and this critical spirit lent itself readily to experiments in hybrid styles of composition which aimed at combining the graces of the Romantic with the dignity of the Heroic poem. The most meritorious of these hybrids was Bernardo Tasso's 'Amadigi,' a long romance in octave stanzas, sustained upon a grave tone throughout, and distinguished from the earlier romantic epics by a more obvious unity of subject. Bernardo Tasso possessed qualities of genius and temper which suited his proposed task. Deficient in humour, he had no difficulty in eliminating that element from the 'Amadigi.' Chivalrous sentiment took the place of irony; scholarly method supplied the want of wayward fancy.

It was just at this point that the young Torquato Tasso made his first essay in poetry. He had inherited his father's temperament, its want of humour, its melancholy, its aristocratic sensitiveness. At the age of seventeen, he was already a ripe scholar, versed in the critical questions which then agitated learned coteries in Italy. The wilding graces and the freshness of the Romantic Epic, as conceived by Boiardo and perfected by Ariosto, had for ever disappeared. To 'recapture that first fine careless rapture' was impossible. Contemporary conditions of society and thought rendered any attempt to do so futile. Italy had passed into a different stage of culture; and the representative poem of Tasso's epoch was imperatively forced to assume a different character. Its type already existed in the 'Amadigi,' though Bernardo Tasso had not the genius to disengage it clearly, or to render

it attractive. How Torquato, while still a student in his teens at Padua, attacked the problem of narrative poetry, appears distinctly in his preface to 'Rinaldo.' 'I believe,' he says, 'that you, my gentle readers, will not take it amiss if I have diverged from the path of modern poets, and have sought to approach the best among the ancients. You shall not, however, find that I am bound by the precise rules of Aristotle, which often render those poems irksome which might otherwise have yielded you much pleasure. I have only followed such of his precepts as do not limit your delight: for instance, in the frequent use of episodes, making the characters talk in their own persons, introducing recognitions and peripeties by necessary or plausible motives, and withdrawing the poet as far as possible from the narration. I have also endeavoured to construct my poem with unity of interest and action, not, indeed, in any strict sense, but so that the subordinate portions should be seen to have their due relation to the whole.' He then proceeds to explain why he has abandoned the discourses on moral and general topics with which Ariosto opened his Cantos, and hints that he has taken Virgil, the 'Prince of Poets,' for his model. Thus the Romantic Epic, as conceived by Tasso, was to break with the tradition of the Cantastorie, who told the tale in his own person and introduced reflections on its incidents. It was to aim at unity of subject, and to observe classical rules of art, without, however, sacrificing the charm of variety and those delights which episodes and marvellous adventures yielded to a modern audience. The youthful poet begs that his 'Rinaldo' should not be censured on the one hand by severely Aristotelian critics who exclude pleasure from their ideal, or on the other by amateurs who regard the 'Orlando Furioso' as the perfection of poetic art. In a word, he hopes to produce something midway between the strict Heroic Epic which had failed in Trissino's 'Italia Liberata' through

dulness, and the genuine Romantic Epic, which in Ariosto's masterpiece diverged too widely from the rules of classical pure taste. This new species, combining the attractions of romance with the simplicity of epic poetry, was the gift which Tasso at the age of eighteen sought to present in his 'Rinaldo' to Italy.

The 'Rinaldo' fulfilled fairly well the conditions propounded by its author. It had a single hero and a single subject—

> Canto i felici affanni, e i primi ardori,
> Che giovinetto ancor soffrì Rinaldo,
> E come il trasse in perigliosi errori
> Desir di gloria ed amoroso caldo.

The perilous achievements and the passion of Rinaldo in his youth form the theme of a poem which is systematically evolved from the first meeting of the son of Amon with Clarice to their marriage under the auspices of Malagigi. There are interesting episodes like those of young Florindo and Olinda, unhappy Clizia and abandoned Floriana. Rinaldo's combat with Orlando in the Christian camp furnishes an anagnorisis; while the plot is brought to its conclusion by the peripeteia of Clarice's jealousy and the accidents which restore her to her lover's arms. Yet, though observant of his own classical rules, Tasso remained in all essential points beneath the spell of the Romantic Epic. The changes which he introduced were obvious to none but professional critics. In warp and woof the 'Rinaldo' is similar to Boiardo's and Ariosto's tale of chivalry; only the loom is narrower, and the pattern of the web less intricate. The air of artlessness which lent its charm to Romance in Italy has disappeared, yielding place to sustained elaboration of Latinising style. Otherwise the fabric remains substantially unaltered—like a Gothic dwelling furnished with Palladian window-frames. We move in the old familiar sphere of Paladins and Paynims, knights errant and

Oriental damsels, magicians and distressed maidens. The action is impelled by the same series of marvellous adventures and felicitous mishaps. There are the same encounters in war and rivalries in love between Christian and Pagan champions; journeys through undiscovered lands and over untracked oceans; fantastic hyperboles of desire, ambition, jealousy, and rage employed as motive passions. Enchanted forests; fairy ships that skim the waves without helm or pilot; lances endowed with supernatural virtues; charmed gardens of perpetual spring; dismal dungeons and glittering palaces, supply the furniture of this romance no less than of its predecessors. Rinaldo, like any other hero of the Renaissance, is agitated by burning thirst for fame and blind devotion to a woman's beauty. We first behold him pining in inglorious leisure: [1]

> Poi, ch' oprar non poss' io che di me s' oda
> Con mia gloria ed onor novella alcuna,
> O cosa, ond' io pregio n' acquisti e loda,
> E mia fama rischiari oscura e bruna.

The vision of Clarice, appearing like Virgil's Camilla, stirs him from this lethargy. He falls in love at first sight, as Tasso's heroes always do, and vows to prove himself her worthy knight by deeds of unexampled daring. Thus the plot is put in motion; and we read in well-appointed order how the hero acquired his horse Baiardo, Tristram's magic lance, his sword Fusberta from Atlante, his armour from Orlando, the trappings of his charger from the House of Courtesy, the ensign of the lion rampant on his shield from Chiarello, and the hand of his lady after some delays from Malagigi.

No new principle is introduced into the romance. As in earlier poems of this species, the religious motive of Christendom at war with Islam becomes a mere machine; the chival-

[1] Canto i. 17.

rous environment affords a vehicle for fanciful adventures. Humour, indeed, is conspicuous by its absence. Charles the Great assumes the sobriety of empire; and his camp, in its well-ordered gravity, prefigures that of Goffredo in the 'Gerusalemme.'[1] Thus Tasso's originality must not be sought in the material of his work, which is precisely that of the Italian romantic school in general, nor yet in its form, which departs from the romantic tradition in details so insignificant as to be inessential. We find it rather in his touch upon the old material, in his handling of the familiar form. The qualities of style, sympathy, sentiment, selection in the use of phrase and image, which determined his individuality as a poet, rendered the 'Rinaldo' a novelty in literature. It will be therefore well to concentrate attention for a while upon those subjective peculiarities by right of which the 'Rinaldo' ranks as a precursor of the 'Gerusalemme.'

The first and the most salient of these is a pronounced effort to heighten style by imitation of Latin poets. The presiding genius of the work is Virgil. Pulci's racy Florentine idiom; Boiardo's frank and natural Lombard manner; Ariosto's transparent and unfettered modern phrase, have been supplanted by a pompous intricacy of construction. The effort to impose Latin rules of syntax on Italian is obvious in such lines as the following:[2]

> Torre ei l' immagin volle, che sospesa
> Era presso l' altar gemmato e sacro,
> Ove in chiaro cristal lampade accesa
> Fea lume di Ciprigna al simulacro:

or in these:

> Umida i gigli e le vermiglie rose
> Del volto, e gli occhi bei conversa al piano,
> Gli occhi, onde in perle accolto il pianto uscia,
> La giovinetta il cavalier seguia.

[1] Canto vi. 64–9.

[2] Canto iii. 40, 45.

Virgil is directly imitated, where he is least worthy of imitation, in the details of his battle-pieces. Thus : [1]

Si riversa Isolier tremando al piano,
Privo di senso e di vigore ignudo,
Ed a lui gli occhi oscura notte involve,
Ed ogni membro ancor se gli dissolve.

. . . . .

Quel col braccio sospeso in aria stando,
Nè lo movendo a questa o a quella parte,
Chè dalla spada ciò gli era conteso,
Voto sembrava in sacro tempio appeso.

. . . . .

Mentre ignaro di ciò che 'l ciel destine,
Così diceva ancor, la lancia ultrice
Rinaldo per la bocca entro gli mise,
E la lingua e 'l parlar per mezzo incise.

This Virgilian imitation yields some glowing flowers of poetry in longer passages of description. Among these may be cited the conquest of Baiardo in the second canto, the shipwreck in the tenth, the chariot of Pluto in the fourth, and the supper with Queen Floriana in the ninth. The episode of Floriana, while closely studied upon the 'Æneid,' is also a first sketch for that of Armida. Indeed, it should be said in passing that Tasso anticipates the 'Gerusalemme' throughout the 'Rinaldo.' The murder of Anselmo by Rinaldo (canto xi.) forecasts the murder of Gernando by his namesake, and leads to the same result of the hero's banishment. The shipwreck, the garden of courtesy, the enchanted boat, and the charmed forest, are motives which reappear improved and elaborated in Tasso's masterpiece.[2]

While Tasso thus sought to heighten diction by Latinisms, he revealed another specific quality of his manner in 'Rinaldo.' This is the inability to sustain heroic style at its ambitious

[1] Canto ii. 22; iv. 28, 33.

[2] *Rinaldo*, cantos x. vii.

level. He frequently drops at the close of the octave stanza into a prosaic couplet, which has all the effect of bathos. Instances are not far to seek: [1]

Già tal insegna acquistò l' avo, e poi
La portàr molti de' nipoti suoi.

. . . . .

E a questi segni ed al crin raro e bianco
Monstrava esser dagli anni oppresso e stanco.

. . . . .

Fu qui vicin dal saggio Alchiso il Mago,
Di far qualch' opra memorabil vago.

. . . . .

Io son Rinaldo,
Solo di servir voi bramoso e caldo.

The reduplication of epithets, and the occasional use of long sonorous Latin words, which characterise Tasso's later manner, are also noticeable in these couplets. Side by side with such weak endings should be placed some specimens, no less characteristic, of vigorous and noble lines: [2]

Nel cor consiston l' armi,
Onde il forte non è chi mai disarmi.

. . . .

Si sta placido e cheto,
Ma serba dell' altiero nel mansueto.

If the 'Rinaldo' prefigures Tasso's maturer qualities of style, it is no less conspicuous for the light it throws upon his eminent poetic faculty. Nothing distinguished him more decidedly from the earlier romantic poets than power over pathetic sentiment conveyed in melodious cadences of oratory. This emerges in Clarice's monologue on love and honour, that combat of the soul which forms a main feature of the lyrics in 'Aminta' and of Erminia's episode in the 'Gerusa-

[1] Canto i. 25, 31, 41, 64. [2] Canto ii. 28, 44.

lemme.'[1] This steeps the whole story of Clizia in a delicious melancholy, foreshadowing the death-scene of Clorinda.[2] This rises in the father's lamentation over his slain Ugone, into the music of a threnody that now recalls Euripides and now reminds us of medieval litanies.[3] Censure might be passed upon rhetorical conceits and frigid affectations in these characteristic outpourings of pathetic feeling. Yet no one can ignore their liquid melody, their transference of emotion through sound into modulated verse. That lyrical outcry, finding rhythmic utterance for tender sentiment, which may be recognised as Tasso's chief addition to romantic poetry, pierces like a song through many passages of mere narration. Rinaldo, while carrying Clarice away upon Baiardo, with no chaste intention in his heart, bids her thus dry her tears:[4]

Egli dice: Signora, onde vi viene
Sì spietato martir, sì grave affanno?
Perchè le luci angeliche e serene
Ricopre della doglia oscuro panno?
Forse fia l' util vostro e 'l vostro bene
Quel ch' or vi sembra insupportabil danno.
Deh! per Dio, rasciugate il caldo pianto.
E l' atroce dolor temprate alquanto.

It is not that we do not find similar lyrical inter-breathings in the narrative of Ariosto. But Tasso developed the lyrism of the octave stanza into something special, lulling the soul upon gentle waves of rising and falling rhythm, foreshadowing the coming age of music in cadences that are untranslateable except by vocal melody. In like manner, the idyll, which had played a prominent part in Boiardo's and in Ariosto's romance, detaches itself with a peculiar sweetness from the course of Tasso's narrative. This appears in the story of Florindo, which contains within itself the germ of the

[1] *Rinaldo*, canto ii. 3–11.
[2] Canto vii. 16–51.
[3] Canto vii. 3–11.
[4] Canto iv. 47.

'Aminta,' the 'Pastor Fido' and the 'Adone.'[1] Together with the bad taste of the artificial pastoral, its preposterous costume (stanza 13), its luxury of tears (stanza 23), we find the tyranny of kisses (stanzas 28, 52), the yearning after the Golden Age (stanza 29), and all the other apparatus of that operatic species. Tasso was the first poet to bathe Arcady in a golden afternoon light of sensuously sentimental pathos. In his idyllic as in his lyrical interbreathings, melody seems absolutely demanded to interpret and complete the plangent rhythm of his dulcet numbers. Emotion so far predominates over intelligence, so yearns to exhale itself in sound and shun the laws of language, that we find already in 'Rinaldo' Tasso's familiar *Non so che* continually used to adumbrate sentiments for which plain words are not indefinite enough.

The 'Rinaldo' was a very remarkable production for a young man of eighteen. It showed the poet in possession of his style and displayed the specific faculties of his imagination. Nothing remained for Tasso now but to perfect and develop the type of art which he had there created. Soon after his first settlement in Ferrara, he began to meditate a more ambitious undertaking. His object was to produce the heroic poem for which Italy had long been waiting, and in this way to rival or surpass the fame of Ariosto. Trissino had chosen a national subject for his epic; but the 'Italia Liberata' was an acknowledged failure, and neither the past nor the present conditions of the Italian people offered good material for a serious poem. The heroic enthusiasms of the age were religious. Revived Catholicism had assumed an attitude of defiance. The Company of Jesus was declaring its crusade against heresy and infidelity throughout the world. Not a quarter of a century had elapsed since Charles V. attacked the Mussulman in Tunis; and before a few more years had passed, the victory of Lepanto was to be won by Italian and Spanish

Canto v. 12–57.

navies. Tasso, therefore, obeyed a wise instinct when he made choice of the First Crusade for his theme, and of Godfrey of Boulogne for his hero. Having to deal with historical facts, he studied the best authorities in chronicles, ransacked such books of geography and travel as were then accessible, paid attention to topography, and sought to acquire what we now call local colouring for the details of his poem. Without the sacrifice of truth in any important point, he contrived to give unity to the conduct of his narrative, while interweaving a number of fictitious characters and marvellous circumstances with the historical personages and actual events of the Crusade. The vital interest of the 'Gerusalemme Liberata' flows from this interpolated material, from the loves of Rinaldo and Tancredi, from the adventures of the Pagan damsels Erminia, Armida, and Clorinda. The 'Gerusalemme' is in truth a Virgilian epic, upon which a romantic poem has been engrafted. Goffredo, idealised into statuesque frigidity, repeats the virtues of Æneas; but the episode of Dido, which enlivens Virgil's hero, is transferred to Rinaldo's part in Tasso's story. The battles of Crusaders and Saracens are tedious copies of the battle in the tenth 'Æneid;' but the duels of Tancredi with Clorinda and Argante breathe the spirit and the fire of chivalry. The celestial and infernal councils, adopted as machinery, recall the rival factions in Olympus; but the force by which the plot moves is love. Pluto and the angel Gabriel are inactive by comparison with Armida, Erminia, and Clorinda. Tasso, in truth, thought that he was writing a religious and heroic poem. What he did write, was a poem of sentiment and passion--a romance. Like Anacreon he might have cried:

θέλω λέγειν 'Ατρείδας,
θέλω δὲ Κάδμον ᾄδειν,
ἁ βάρβιτος δὲ χορδαῖς
Ερωτα μοῦνον ἠχεῖ.

He displayed, indeed, marvellous ingenuity and art in so connecting the two strains of his subject, the stately Virgilian history and the glowing modern romance, that they should contribute to the working of a single plot. Yet he could not succeed in vitalising the former, whereas the latter will live as long as human interest in poetry endures. No one who has studied the 'Gerusalemme' returns with pleasure to Goffredo, or feels that the piety of the Christian heroes is inspired. He skips canto after canto dealing with the Crusade, to dwell upon those lyrical outpourings of love, grief, anguish, vain remorse, and injured affection which the supreme poet of sentiment has invented for his heroines; he recognises the genuine inspiration of Erminia's pastoral idyll, of Armida's sensuous charms, of Clorinda's dying words, of the Siren's song and the music of the magic bird: of all, in fact, which is not pious in the poem.

Tancredi, between Erminia and Clorinda, the one woman adoring him, the other beloved by him—the melancholy graceful modern Tancredi, Tasso's own soul's image—is the veritable hero of the 'Gerusalemme;' and by a curious unintended propriety he disappears from the action before the close, without a word. The force of the poem is spiritualised and concentrated in Clorinda's death, which may be cited as an instance of sublimity in pathos. It is idyllised in the episode of Erminia among the shepherds, and sensualised in the supreme beauty of Armida's garden. Rinaldo ranks second in importance to Tancredi; and Goffredo, on whom Tasso bestows the blare of his Virgilian trumpet from the first line to the last, is poetically of no importance whatsoever. Argante, Solimano, Tisaferno, excite our interest, and win the sympathy we cannot spare the saintly hero; and in the death of Solimano Tasso's style, for once, verges upon tragic sublimity.

What Tasso aimed at in the 'Gerusalemme' was nobility. This quality had not been prominent in Ariosto's art. If he

could attain it, his ambition to rival the 'Orlando Furioso' would be satisfied. One main condition of success Tasso brought to the achievement. His mind itself was eminently noble, incapable of baseness, fixed on fair and worthy objects of contemplation. Yet the personal nobility which distinguished him as a thinker and a man, was not of the heroic type. He had nothing Homeric in his inspiration, nothing of the warrior or the patriot in his nature. His genius, when it pursued its bias, found instinctive utterance in elegy and idyll, in meditative rhetoric and pastoral melody. In order to assume the heroic strain, Tasso had recourse to scholarship, and gave himself up blindly to the guidance of Latin poets. This was consistent with the tendency of the Classical Revival; but since the subject to be dignified by epic style was Christian and medieval, a discord between matter and manner amounting almost to insincerity resulted. Some examples will make the meaning of this criticism more apparent. When Goffredo rejects the embassy of Alete and Argante, he declares his firm intention of delivering Jerusalem in spite of overwhelming perils. The Crusaders can but perish:

Noi morirem, ma non morremo inulti. (ii. 86.)

This of course is a reminiscence of Dido's last words, and the difference between the two situations creates a disagreeable incongruity. The nod of Jove upon Olympus is translated to express the fiat of the Almighty (xiii. 74); Gabriel is tricked out in the plumes and colours of Mercury (i. 13–15); the very angels singing round the throne become 'dive sirene' (xiv. 9); the armoury of heaven is described in terms which reduce Michael's spear and the arrows of pestilence to ordinary weapons (vii. 81); hell is filled with harpies, centaurs, hydras, pythons, the common lumber of classical Tartarus (iv. 5); the angel sent to cure Goffredo's wound culls dittany on Ida

(xi. 72); the heralds, interposing between Tancredi and Argante, hold pacific sceptres and have naught of chivalry (vi. 51). It may be said that both Dante before Tasso and Milton after him employed similar classical language in dealing with Christian and medieval motives. But this will hardly serve as an excuse; for Dante and Milton communicate so intense a conviction of religious earnestness that their Latinisms, even though incongruous, are recognised as the mere clothing of profoundly felt ideas. The sublimity, the seriousness, the spiritual dignity is in their thought, not in its expression; whereas Tasso too frequently leaves us with the certainty that he has sought by ceremonious language to realise more than he could grasp with the imagination. In his council of the powers of hell, for instance, he creates monsters of huge dimensions and statuesque distinctness; but these are neither grotesquely horrible like Dante's, nor are they spirits with incalculable capacity for evil like Milton's.

> Stampano alcuni il suol di ferine orme,
> E in fronte umana han chiome d' angui attorte;
> E lor s' aggira dietro immensa coda,
> Che quasi sferza si ripiega e snoda.

Against this we have to place the dreadful scene of Satan with his angels transformed to snakes ('Par. Lost,' x. 508–584), and the Dantesque horror of the 'vermo reo che 'l mondo fora' ('Inf.' xxxiv. 108). Again, when Dante cries—

> O Sommo Giove,
> Che fosti in terra per noi crocifisso!

we feel that the Latin phrase is accidental. The spirit of the poet remains profoundly Christian. Tasso's Jehovah-Jupiter is always 'il Re del Ciel;' and the court of blessed spirits which surrounds his 'gran seggio,' though described with solemn pomp of phrase, cannot be compared with the Mystic Rose of Paradise (ix. 55–60). What Tasso lacks is authenticity

of vision; and his heightened style only renders this imaginative poverty, this want of spiritual conviction, more apparent.

His frequent borrowings from Virgil are less unsuccessful when the matter to be illustrated is not of this exalted order. Many similes (vii. 55, vii. 76, viii. 74) have been transplanted with nice propriety. Many descriptions, like that of the approach of night (ii. 96), of the nightingale mourning for her young (xii. 90), of the flying dream (xiv. 6), have been translated with exquisite taste. Dido's impassioned apostrophe to Æneas reappears appropriately upon Armida's lips (xvi. 56). We welcome such culled phrases as the following:

> l' orticel dispensa
> Cibi non compri alla mia parca mensa (vii. 10).
>
> Premer gli alteri, e sollevar gl' imbelli (x. 76).
>
> E Tisaferno, il folgore di Marte (xvii. 31).
>
> Va, vedi, e vinci (xvii. 38).
>
> Ma mentre dolce parla e dolce ride (iv. 92).
>
> Chè vinta la materia è dal lavoro (xvi. 2).
>
> Non temo io te, nè tuoi gran vanti, o fero:
> Ma il Cielo e il mio nemico amor pavento (xix. 73).

It may, however, be observed that in the last of these passages Tasso does not show a just discriminative faculty. Turnus said:

> Non me tua fervida terrent
> Dicta, ferox: Di me terrent et Jupiter hostis.

From Jupiter to Amor is a descent from sublimity to pathos. In like manner when Hector's ghost reappears in the ghost of Armida's mother,

> Quanto diversa, oimè, da quel che pria
> Visto altrove (iv. 49),

the reminiscence suggests ideas that are unfavourable to the modern version.

In his description of battles, the mustering of armies, and military operations, Tasso neither draws from medieval sources nor from experience, but imitates the battle-pieces of Virgil and Lucan, sometimes with fine rhetorical effect and sometimes with wearisome frigidity. The death of Latino and his five sons is both touching in itself, and a good example of this Virgilian mannerism (ix. 35). The death of Dudone is justly celebrated as a sample of successful imitation (iii. 45):

> Cade; e gli occhi, ch' appena aprir si ponno,
> Dura quiete preme e ferreo sonno.

The wound of Gerniero, on the contrary, illustrates the peril of seeking after conceits in the inferior manner of the master (ix. 69):

> La destra di Gerniero, onde ferita
> Ella fu pria, manda recisa al piano;
> Tratto anco il ferro, e con tremanti dita
> Semiviva nel suol guizza la mano.

The same may be said about the wound of Algazèl (ix. 78) and the death of Ardonio (xx. 39). In the description of the felling of the forest (iii. 75, 76) and of the mustering of the Egyptian army (xvii. 1–36) Tasso's Virgilian style attains real grandeur and poetic beauty.

Tasso was nothing if not a learned poet. It would be easy to illustrate what he has borrowed from Lucretius, or to point out that the pathos of Clorinda's apparition to Tancredi after death is a debt to Petrarch. It may, however, suffice here to indicate six phrases taken straight from Dante; since the 'Divine Comedy' was little studied in Tasso's age, and his selection of these lines reflects credit on his taste. These are:

> Onorate l' altissimo campione! (iii. 73: 'Inf.' iv.)
> Goffredo intorno gli occhi gravi e tardi (vii. 58: 'Inf.' iv.)
> a riveder le stelle (iv. 18: 'Inf.' xxxiv.)
> Ond' è ch' or tanto ardire in voi s' alletti? (ix. 76: 'Inf.' ix.)

A guisa di leon quando si posa (x. 56: 'Purg.' vi.)
e guardi e passi (xx. 43: 'Inf.' iii.)

As in the 'Rinaldo,' so also in the 'Gerusalemme,' Tasso's classical proclivities betrayed him into violation of the clear Italian language. Afraid of what is natural and common, he produced what is artificial and conceited. Hence came involved octaves like the following (vi. 109):

Siccome cerva, ch' assetata il passo
Mova a cercar d' acque lucenti e vive,
Ove un bel fonte distillar da un sasso
O vide un fiume tra frondose rive,
Se incontra i cani allor che il corpo lasso
Ristorar crede all' onde, all' ombre estive,
Volge indietro fuggendo, e la paura
La stanchezza obbliar face e l' arsura.

The image is beautiful; but the diction is elaborately intricate, rhetorically indistinct. We find the same stylistic involution in these lines (xii. 6):

Ma s' egli avverrà pur che mia ventura
Nel mio ritorno mi rinchiuda il passo,
D' uom che in amor m' è padre a te la cura
E delle fide mie donzelle io lasso.

The limpid well of native utterance is troubled at its source by scholastic artifices in these as in so many other passages of Tasso's masterpiece. Nor was he yet emancipated from the weakness of 'Rinaldo.' Trying to soar upon the borrowed plumes of pseudo-classical sublimity, he often fell back wearied by this uncongenial effort into prose. Lame endings to stanzas, sudden descents from highly wrought to pedestrian diction, are not uncommon in the 'Gerusalemme.' The poet, diffident of his own inspiration, sought inspiration from books. In the magnificence of single lines again, the 'Gerusalemme' reminds us of 'Rinaldo.' Tasso gained dignity of rhythm by

choosing Latin adjectives and adverbs with pompous cadences. No versifier before his date had consciously employed the sonorous music of such lines as the following:

Foro, tentando inaccessibil via (ii. 29).
Ond' Amor l' arco inevitabil tende (iii. 24).
Questa muraglia impenetrabil fosse (iii. 51).
Furon vedute fiammeggiare insieme (v. 28).
Qual capitan ch' inespugnabil terra (v. 64).
Sotto l' inevitabile tua spada (xvi. 33).
Immense solitudini d' arena (xvii. 1).

The last of these lines presents an impressive landscape in three melodious words.

These verbal and stylistic criticisms are not meant to cast reproach on Tasso as a poet. If they have any value, it is the light they throw upon conditions under which the poet was constrained to work. Humanism and the Catholic Revival reduced this greatest genius of his age to the necessity of clothing religious sentiments in scholastic phraseology, with the view of attaining to epic grandeur. But the Catholic Revival was no regeneration of Christianity from living sources; and humanism had run its course in Italy, and was ending in the sands of critical self-consciousness. Thus piety in Tasso appears superficial and conventional rather than profoundly felt or originally vigorous; while the scholarship which supplied his epic style is scrupulous and timid.

The enduring qualities of Tasso as a modern poet have still to be indicated; and to this more grateful portion of my argument I now address myself. Much might be said in the first place about his rhetorical dexterity—the flexibility of language in his hands, and the copiousness of thought, whereby he was able to adorn varied situations and depict diversity of passions with appropriate diction. Whether Alete is subtly pleading a seductive cause, or Goffredo is answering his sophistries with well-weighed arguments; whether Pluto

addresses the potentates of hell, or Erminia wavers between love and honour; whether Tancredi pours forth the extremity of his despair, or Armida heaps reproaches on Rinaldo in his flight; the musical and luminously polished stanzas lend themselves without change of style to every gradation of the speaker's mood. In this art of rhetoric, Tasso seems to have taken Livy for his model; and many of the speeches which adorn the graver portions of his poem, are noticeable for compact sententious wisdom.

In fancy Tasso was not so naturally rich and inventive as the author of 'Orlando Furioso.' Yet a gallery of highly finished pictures might be collected from his similes and metaphors. What pride and swiftness mark this vision of a thunderbolt:

> Grande ma breve fulmine il diresti,
> Che inaspettato sopraggiunga e passi;
> Ma del suo corso momentaneo resti
> Vestigio eterno in dirupati sassi (xx. 93).

How delicately touched is this uprising of the morning star from ocean:

> Qual mattutina stella esce dell' onde
> Rugiadosa e stillante; o come fuore
> Spuntò nascendo già dalle feconde
> Spume dell' ocean la Dea d' amore (xv. 60).

Here is an image executed in the style of Ariosto. Clorinda has received a wound on her uncovered head:

> Fu levissima piaga, e i biondi crini
> Rosseggiaron così d' alquante stille,
> Come rosseggia l' or che di rubini
> Per man d' illustre artefice sfaville (iii. 30).

Flowers furnish the poet with exquisite suggestions of colour:

> D' un bel pallor ha il bianco volto asperso,
> Come a gigli sarian miste viole (xii. 69).

Quale a pioggia d' argento e mattutina
Si rabbellisce scolorita rosa (xx. 129).

Sometimes the painting is minutely finished like a miniature:

Così piuma talor, che di gentile
Amorosa colomba il collo cinge,
Mai non si scorge a sè stessa simile,
Ma in diversi colori al sol si tinge:
Or d' accesi rubin sembra un monile,
Or di verdi smeraldi il lume finge,
Or insieme li mesce, e varia e vaga
In cento modi i riguardanti appaga (xv. 5).

Sometimes the style is broad, the touch vigorous:

Qual feroce destrier, ch' al faticoso
Onor dell' arme vincitor sia tolto,
E lascivo marito in vil riposo
Fra gli armenti e ne' paschi erri disciolto,
Se il desta o suon di tromba, o luminoso
Acciar, colà tosto annitrendo è volto;
Già già brama l' arringo, e l' uom sul dorso
Portando, urtato riurtar nel corso (xvi. 28).

I will content myself with referring to the admirably conceived simile of a bulky galleon at sea attacked by a swifter and more agile vessel (xix. 13), which may perhaps have suggested to Fuller his famous comparison of Shakspere and Ben Jonson in their wit encounters.

But Tasso was really himself, incomparable and unapproachable, when he wrote in what musicians would call the *largo e maestoso* mood.

Giace l' alta Cartago; appena i segni
Dell' alte sue ruine il lido serba.
Muoiono le città, muoiono i regni;
Copre i fasti e le pompe arena ed erba;
E l' uomo d' esser mortal par che si sdegni!
Oh nostra mente cupida e superba! (xv. 20).

This is perfect in its measured melancholy, the liquid flow of its majestic simplicity. The same musical breadth, the same noble sweetness, pervade a passage on the eternal beauty of the heavens compared with the brief brightness of a woman's eyes:

> oh quante belle
> Luci il tempio celeste in sè raguna!
> Ha il suo gran carro il dì; le aurate stelle
> Spiega la notte e l' argentata luna;
> Ma non è chi vagheggi o questa o quelle;
> E miriam noi torbida luce e bruna,
> Che un girar d' occhi, un balenar di riso
> Scopre in breve confin di fragil viso (xviii. 13).

This verbal music culminates in the two songs of earthly joy, the *chants d'amour*, or hymns to pleasure, sung by Armida's ministers (xiv. 60–65, xvi. 12, 13). Boiardo and Ariosto had painted the seductions of enchanted gardens, where valour was enthralled by beauty, and virtue dulled by voluptuous delights. It remained for Tasso to give that magic of the senses vocal utterance. From the myrtle groves of Orontes, from the spell-bound summer amid snows upon the mountains of the Fortunate Isle, these lyrics with their penetrative sweetness, their lingering regret, pass into the silence of the soul. It is eminently characteristic of Tasso's mood and age that the melody of both these honeyed songs should thrill with sadness. Nature is at war with honour; youth passes like a flower away; therefore let us love and yield our hearts to pleasure while we can. 'Sehnsucht,' the soul of modern sentiment, the inner core of modern music, makes its entrance into the sphere of art with these two hymns. The division of the mind, wavering between natural impulse and acquired morality, gives the tone of melancholy to the one chant. In the other, the invitation to self-abandonment is mingled with a forecast of old age and death. Only Catullus, in his song to Lesbia, among the ancients touched this note; only

Villon, perhaps, in his Ballade of Dead Ladies, touched it among the moderns before Tasso. But it has gone on sounding ever since through centuries which have enjoyed the luxury of grief in music.

If Tancredi be the real hero of the 'Gerusalemme,' Armida is the heroine. The action of the epic follows her movements. She combines the parts of Angelica and Alcina in one that is original and novel. A sorceress, deputed by the powers of hell to defeat the arms of the Crusaders, Armida falls herself in love with a Christian champion. Love changes her from a beautiful white witch into a woman.[1] When she meets Rinaldo in the battle, she discharges all her arrows vainly at the man who has deserted her. One by one, they fly and fall; and as they wing their flight, Love wounds her own heart with his shafts:

> Scocca l' arco più volte, e non fa piaga,
> E, mentre ella saetta, amor lei piaga (xx. 65).

Then she turns to die in solitude. Rinaldo follows, and stays her in the suicidal act. Despised and rejected as she is, she cannot hate him. The man she had entangled in her wiles has conquered and subdued her nature. To the now repentant minister of hell he proposes baptism: and Armida consents:

> Sì parla, e prega; e i preghi bagna e scalda
> Or di lagrime rare, or di sospiri:
> Onde, siccome suol nevosa falda
> Dov' arde il sole, o tepid' aura spiri,
> Così l' ira che in lei parea sì salda,
> Solvesi, e restan sol gli altri desiri.
> *Ecco l' ancilla tua*; d' essa a tuo senno
> Dispon, gli disse, e le fia legge il cenno (xx. 136).

This metamorphosis of the enchantress into the woman in Armida, is the climax of the 'Gerusalemme.' It is also the

[1] I may incidentally point out how often this motive has supplied the plot to modern ballets.

climax and conclusion of Italian romantic poetry, the resolution of its magic and marvels into the truths of human affection. Notice, too, with what audacity Tasso has placed the words of Mary on the lips of his converted sorceress! Deliberately planning a religious and heroic poem, he assigns the spoils of conquered hell to love triumphant in a woman's breast. Beauty, which in itself is diabolical, the servant of the lords of Hades, attains to apotheosis through affection. In Armida we already surmise *das Ewig-Weibliche* of Goethe's Faust, Gretchen saving her lover's soul before Madonna's throne in glory.

What was it, then, that Tasso, this 'child of a later and a colder age,' as Shelley called him, gave of permanent value to European literature? We have seen that the 'Gerusalemme' did not fulfil the promise of heroic poetry for that eminently unheroic period. We know that neither the Virgilian hero nor the laboriously developed theme commands the interest of posterity. We feel that religious emotion is feeble here, and that the classical enthusiasm of the Renaissance is on the point of expiring in those Latinistic artifices. Yet the interwoven romance contains a something difficult to analyse, intangible and evanescent—*un non so che*, to use the poet's favourite phrase—which riveted attention in the sixteenth century, and which harmonises with our own sensibility to beauty. Tasso, in one word, was the poet, not of passion, not of humour, not of piety, not of elevated action, but of that new and undefined emotion which we call sentiment. Unknown to the ancients, implicit in later medieval art, but not evolved with clearness from romance, alien to the sympathies of the Renaissance as determined by the Classical Revival, sentiment, that *non so che* of modern feeling, waited for its first apocalypse in Tasso's work. The phrase which I have quoted, and which occurs so frequently in this poet's verse, indicates the intrusion of a new element into the sphere of

European feeling. Vague, indistinct, avoiding outline, the phrase *un non so che* leaves definition to the instinct of those who feel, but will not risk the limitation of their feeling by submitting it to words. Nothing in antique psychology demanded a term of this kind. Classical literature, in close affinity to sculpture, dealt with concrete images and conscious thoughts. The medieval art of Dante, precisely, mathematically measured, had not felt the need of it. Boccaccio's clear-cut intaglios from life and nature, Petrarch's compassed melodies, Poliziano's polished arabesques, Ariosto's bright and many-coloured pencillings, were all of them, in all their varied phases of Renaissance expression, distinguished by decision and firmness of drawing. Vagueness, therefore, had hitherto found no place in European poetry or plastic art. But music, the supreme symbol of spiritual infinity in art, was now about to be developed; and the specific touch of Tasso, the musician-poet, upon portraiture and feeling, called forth this quality of vagueness, a vagueness that demanded melody to give what it refused from language to accept. Mendelssohn, when some one asked him what is meant by music, replied that it had meanings for his mind more unmistakable than those which words convey; but what these meanings were, he did not or he could not make clear. This certainty of sentiment, seeming vague only because it floats beyond the scope of language in regions of tone and colour and emotion, is what Tasso's *non so che* suggests to those who comprehend. And Tasso, by his frequent appeal to it, by his migration from the plastic into the melodic realm of the poetic art, proved himself the first genuinely sentimental artist of the modern age. It is just this which gave him a wider and more lasting empire over the heart through the next two centuries than that claimed by Ariosto.

It may not be unprofitable to examine in detail Tasso's use of the phrase to which so much importance has been

assigned in the foregoing paragraph. We meet it first in the episode of Olindo and Sofronia. Sofronia, of all the heroines of the 'Gerusalemme,' is the least interesting, notwithstanding her magnanimous mendacity and jesuitical acceptance of martyrdom. Olindo touches the weaker fibres of our sympathy by his feminine devotion to a woman placed above him in the moral scale, whose love he wins by splendid falsehood equal to her own. The episode, entirely idle in the action of the poem, has little to recommend it, if we exclude the traditionally accepted reference to Tasso's love for Leonora d' Este. But when Olindo and Sofronia are standing, back to back, against the stake, Aladino, who has decreed their death by burning, feels his rude bosom touched with sudden pity:

> Un non so che d' inusitato e molle
> Par che nel duro petto al re trapasse:
> Ei presentillo, e si sdegnò; nè volle
> Piegarsi, e gli occhi torse, e si ritrasse (ii. 37).

The intrusion of a lyrical emotion, unknown before in the tyrant's breast, against which he contends with anger, and before the force of which he bends, prepares us for the happy *dénouement* brought about by Clorinda. This vague stirring of the soul, this *non so che*, this sentiment, is the real agent in Sofronia's release and Olindo's beatification.

Clorinda is about to march upon her doom. She is inflamed with the ambition to destroy the engines of the Christian host by fire at night; and she calls Argante to her counsels:

> Buona pezza è, signor, che in sè raggira
> Un non so che d' insolito e d' audace
> La mia mente inquieta; o Dio l' inspira,
> O l' uom del suo voler suo Dio si face (xii. 5).

Thus at this solemn point of time, when death is certainly in front, when she knows not whether God has inspired her

or whether she has made of her own wish a deity, Clorinda utters the mystic word of vague compulsive feeling.

Erminia, taken captive by Tancredi after the siege of Antioch, is brought into her master's tent. He treats her with chivalrous courtesy, and offers her a knight's protection:

> Allora un non so che soave e piano
> Sentii, ch' al cor mi scese, e vi s' affisse,
> Che, serpendomi poi per l' alma vaga,
> Non so come, divenne incendio e piaga (xix. 94).

At that moment, by the distillation of that vague emotion into vein and marrow, Erminia becomes Tancredi's slave, and her future is determined.

These examples are, perhaps, sufficient to show how Tasso, at the turning-points of destiny for his most cherished personages, invoked indefinite emotion to adumbrate the forces with which will contends in vain. But the master phrase rings even yet more tyrannously in the passage of Clorinda's death, which sums up all of sentiment included in romance. Long had Tancredi loved Clorinda. Meeting her in battle, he stood her blows defenceless; for Clorinda was an Amazon, reduced by Tasso's gentle genius to womanhood from the proportions of Marfisa. Finally, with heart surcharged with love for her, he has to cross his sword in deadly duel with this lady. Malign stars rule the hour: he knows not who she is: misadventure makes her, instead of him, the victim of their encounter. With her last breath she demands baptism—the good Tasso, so it seems, could not send so fair a creature of his fancy as Clorinda to the shades without viaticum; and his poetry rises to the sublime of pathos in this stanza:

> Amico, hai vinto: io ti perdon: perdona
> Tu ancora: al corpo no, che nulla pave;
> All' alma sì: deh! per lei prega; e dona
> Battesmo a me ch' ogni mia colpa lave.

In queste voci languide risuona
Un non so che di flebile e soave
Ch' al cor gli serpe, ed ogni sdegno ammorza,
E gli occhi a lagrimar gl' invoglia e sforza (xii. 66).

Here the vague emotion, the *non so che*, distils itself through Clorinda's voice into Tancredi's being. Afterwards it thrills there like moaning winds in an Æolian lyre, reducing him to despair upon his bed of sickness, and reasserting its lyrical charm in the vision which he has of Clorinda among the trees of the enchanted forest. He stands before the cypress where the soul of his dead lady seems to his misguided fancy prisoned; and the branches murmur in his ears:

Fremere intanto udia continuo il vento
Tra le frondi del bosco e tra i virgulti,
E trarne un suon che flebile concento
Par d' umani sospiri e di singulti;
E un non so che confuso instilla al core
Di pietà, di spavento e di dolore (xiii. 40).

The master word, the magic word of Tasso's sentiment, is uttered at this moment of illusion. The poet has no key to mysteries locked up within the human breast more powerful than this indefinite *un non so che*.

Enough has been said to show how Tasso used the potent spell of vagueness, when he found himself in front of supreme situations. This is in truth the secret of his mastery over sentiment, the spell whereby he brings nature and night, the immense solitudes of deserts, the darkness of forests, the wailings of the winds and the plangent litanies of sea-waves into accord with overstrained humanity. It was a great discovery; by right of it Tasso proved himself the poet of the coming age.

When the 'Gerusalemme' was completed, Tasso had done his best work as a poet. The misfortunes which began to gather round him in his thirty-first year, made him well-nigh

indifferent to the fate of the poem which had drained his life-force, and from which he had expected so much glory. It was published without his permission or supervision. He, meanwhile, in the prison of S. Anna, turned his attention to prose composition. The long series of dialogues, with which he occupied the irksome leisure of seven years, interesting as they are in matter and genial in style, indicate that the poet was now in abeyance. It remained to be seen whether inspiration would revive with freedom. No sooner were the bolts withdrawn than his genius essayed a fresh flight. He had long meditated the composition of a tragedy, and had already written some scenes. At Mantua in 1586–7 this work took the form of 'Torrismondo.' It cannot be called a great drama, for it belongs to the rigid declamatory species of Italian tragedy; and Tasso's genius was romantic, idyllic, elegiac, anything but genuinely tragic. Yet the style is eminent for nobility and purity. Just as the 'Aminta' showed how unaffected Tasso could be when writing without preconceived theories of heightened diction, so the 'Torrismondo' displays an unstrained dignity of simple dialogue. It testifies to the plasticity of language in the hands of a master, who deliberately chose and sustained different styles in different species of poetry, and makes us regret that he should have formed his epic manner upon so artificial a type. The last chorus of 'Torrismondo' deserves to be mentioned as a perfect example of Tasso's melancholy elegiac pathos.

Meanwhile he began to be dissatisfied with the 'Gerusalemme,' and in 1588 he resolved upon remodelling his masterpiece. The real vitality of that poem was, as we have seen, in its romance. But Tasso thought otherwise. During the fourteen years which elapsed since its completion, the poet's youthful fervour had been gradually fading out. Inspiration yielded to criticism; piety succeeded to sentiment and enthusiasm for art. Therefore, in this later phase of his

maturity, with powers impaired by prolonged sufferings and wretched health, tormented by religious scruples and vague persistent fear, he determined to eliminate the romance from the epic, to render its unity of theme more rigorous, and to concentrate attention upon the serious aspects of the subject. The result of this plan, pursued through five years of wandering, was the 'Gerusalemme Conquistata,' a poem which the world has willingly let die, in which the style of the 'Gerusalemme Liberata' is worsened, and which now serves mainly to establish by comparison the fact that what was immortal in Tasso's art was the romance he ruthlessly rooted out. A further step in this transition from art to piety is marked by the poem upon the Creation of the World, called 'Le Sette Giornate.' Written in blank verse, it religiously but tamely narrates the operation of the Divine Artificer, following the first chapter of Genesis and expanding the motive of each of the seven days with facile rhetoric. Of action and of human interest the poem has none; of artistic beauty little. The sustained descriptive style wearies; and were not this the last work of Tasso, it would not be mentioned by posterity.

Tasso has already occupied us through two chapters. Before passing onward I must, however, invite the reader to pause awhile and reconsider, even at the risk of retrospect and repetition, some of the salient features of his character. And now I remember that of his personal appearance nothing has hitherto been said. 'Tasso was tall, well-proportioned, and of very fair complexion. His thick hair and beard were of a light-brown colour. His head was large, forehead broad and square, eyebrows dark, eyes large lively and blue, nose large and curved toward the mouth, lips thin and pale.' So writes Manso, the poet's friend and biographer; adding: 'His voice was clear and sonorous; but he read his poems badly, because of a slight impediment in his speech, and because he was short-sighted.' I know not whether I am justified in

drawing from this description the conclusion that Tasso was, physically, a man of mixed lymphatic and melancholic temperament, of more than ordinary sensitiveness. Imperfection, at any rate, is indicated by the thin pale lips, the incoherent utterance and the uncertain vision to which his friend in faithfulness bears witness. Of painted portraits representing Tasso in later life there are many; but most of these seem to be based upon the mask taken from his face after death, which still exists at S. Onofrio. Twenty-one years ago I gazed upon this mask, before I knew more than every schoolboy knows of Tasso's life and writings. This is what I wrote about it in my Roman diary: 'The face is mild and weak, especially in the thin short chin and feeble mouth.[1] The forehead round, and ample in proportion to the other features. The eyes are small, but this may be due to the contraction of death. The mouth is almost vulgar, very flat in the upper lip; but this also ought perhaps to be attributed to the relaxation of tissue by death.'

Tasso was constitutionally inclined to pensive moods. His outlook over life was melancholy.[2] The tone of his literary work, whether in prose or poetry, is elegiac—musically, often querulously plaintive. There rests a shadow of dejection over all he wrote and thought and acted. Yet he was finely sensitive to pleasure, thrillingly alive to sentimental beauty.[3] Though the man lived purely, untainted by the license of the age, his genius soared highest when he sang some soft luxurious strain of love. He was wholly deficient in humour. Taking himself and the world of men and things too much in

[1] Giov. Imperiale in the *Museum Historicum* describes him thus: 'Perpetuo moerentis et altius cogitantis gessit aspectum, *gracili mento*, facie decolori, conniventibus cavisque oculis.'

[2] 'La mia fiera malinconia' is a phrase which often recurs in his letters.

[3] 'Questo segno mi ho proposto: piacere ed onore' (*Lettere*, vol. v. p. 87).

earnest, he weighed heavily alike on art and life. The smallest trifles, if they touched him, seemed to him important.[1] Before imaginary terrors he shook like an aspen. The slightest provocation roused his momentary resentment. The most insignificant sign of neglect or coldness wounded his self-esteem. Plaintive, sensitive to beauty, sentimental, tender, touchy, self-engrossed, devoid of humour—what a sentient instrument was this for uttering Æolian melodies, and straining discords through storm-jangled strings!

From the Jesuits, in childhood, he received religious impressions which might almost be described as mesmeric or hypnotic in their influence upon his nerves. These abode with him through manhood; and in later life morbid scruples and superstitious anxieties about his soul laid hold on his imagination. Yet religion did not penetrate Tasso's nature. As he conceived it, there was nothing solid and supporting in its substance. Piety was neither deeply rooted nor indigenous, neither impassioned nor logically reasoned, in the adult man.[2] What it might have been, but for those gimcrack ecstasies before the Host in boyhood, cannot now be fancied. If he contained the stuff of saint or simple Christian, this was sterilised and stunted by the clever fathers in their school at Naples.

During the years of his feverishly active adolescence Tasso played for a while with philosophical doubts. But though he read widely and speculated diffusely on the problems of the universe, he failed to pierce below the surface of the questions

[1] It should be said that as a man of letters he bore with fools gladly, and showed a noble patience. Of this there is a fine example in his controversy with the Della Cruscans. He was not so patient with the publishers and pirates of his works. No wonder, when they robbed him so!

[2] Tasso's diffuse paraphrase of the *Stabat Mater* might be selected to illustrate the sentimental tenderness rather than strength of his religious feeling.

which he handled. His own beliefs had been tested in no red-hot crucible, before he recoiled with terror from their analysis. The man, to put it plainly, was incapable of honest revolt against the pietistic fashions of his age, incapable of exploratory efforts, and yet too intelligent to rest satisfied with gross dogmatism or smug hypocrisy. Neither as a thinker, nor as a Christian, nor yet again as that epicene religious being, a Catholic of the Counter-Reformation, did this noble and ingenuous, but weakly nature attain to thoroughness.

Tasso's mind was lively and sympathetic; not penetrative, not fitted for forming original or comprehensive views. He lived for no great object, whether political, moral, religious, or scientific. He committed himself to no vice. He obeyed no absorbing passion of love or hatred. In his misfortunes he displayed the helplessness which stirs mere pity for a prostrate human being. The poet who complained so querulously, who wept so copiously, who forgot offence so nonchalantly, cannot command admiration.

There is nothing sublimely tragic in Tasso's suffering. The sentiment inspired by it is that at best of pathos. An almost childish self-engrossment restricted his thoughts, his aims and aspirations, to a narrow sphere, within which he wandered incurably idealistic, pursuing prosaic or utilitarian objects—the favour of princes, place at Courts, the recovery of his inheritance—in a romantic and unpractical spirit.[1] Vacillating, irresolute, peevish, he roamed through all the towns of Italy, demanding more than sympathy could give, exhausting friendship, changing from place to place, from lord to lord. Yet how touching was the destiny of this laurelled exile, this brilliant wayfarer on the high-roads of a world he never under-

[1] The numerous plaintive requests for a silver cup, a ring, a silk cloak, and such trifles in his later letters indicate something quite childish in his preoccupations.

stood! Shelley's phrase, 'the world's rejected guest,' exactly seems to suit him. And yet he allowed himself to become the spoilt child of his misfortunes. Without them, largely self-created as they were, Tasso could not now appeal to our hearts. Nor does he appeal to us as Dante, eating the salt bread of patrons' tables, does; as Milton, blind and fallen on evil days; as Chatterton, perishing in pride and silence; as Johnson, turning from the stairs of Chesterfield; as Bruno, averting stern eyes from the crucifix; as Leopardi, infusing the virus of his suffering into the veins of humanity; as Heine, motionless upon his mattrass grave. These more potent personalities, bequeathing to the world examples of endurance, have won the wreath of never-blasted bays which shall not be set on Tasso's forehead. We crown him with frailer leaves, bedewed with tears tender as his own sentiment, and aureoled with the light that emanates from pure and delicate creations of his fancy.

Though Tasso does not command admiration by heroism, he wins compassion as a beautiful and finely gifted nature inadequate to cope with the conditions of his century. For a poet to be independent in that age of intellectual servitude was well-nigh impossible. To be light-hearted and ironically indifferent lay not in Tasso's temperament. It was no less difficult for a man of his mental education to maintain the balance between orthodoxy and speculation, faith and reason, classical culture and Catholicism, the Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation. He belonged in one sense too much, and in another sense too little, to his epoch. One eminent critic calls him the only Christian of the Italian Renaissance, another with equal justice treats him as the humanistic poet of the Catholic Revival.[1]

Properly speaking, he was the genius of that transition

[1] Carducci, in his essay *Dello Svolgimento della Letteratura Nazionale*; and Quinet, in his *Révolutions d'Italie*.

from the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation, on which I dwelt in the second chapter of this work. By natural inclination he belonged to the line of artists which began with Boccaccio and culminated in Ariosto. But his training and the bias of the times in which he lived, made him break with Boccaccio's tradition. He tried to be the poet of the Council of Trent, without having assimilated hypocrisy or acquired false taste, without comprehending the essentially prosaic and worldly nature of that religious revolution. He therefore lived and worked in a continual discord. This may not suffice to account for the unhingement of his reason. I prefer to explain that by the fatigue of intellectual labour and worry acting on a brain predisposed for melancholia and overtasked from infancy. But it does account for the moral martyrdom he suffered, and the internal perplexity to which he was habitually subject.

When Tasso first saw the light, the Italians had rejected the Reformation and consented to stifle free thought. The culture of the Renaissance had been condemned ; the Spanish hegemony had been accepted. Of this new attitude the concordat between Charles and Clement, the Tridentine Council, the Inquisition and the Company of Jesus were external signs. But these potent agencies had not accomplished their work in Tasso's lifetime. He was rent in twain because he could not react against them as Bruno did, and could not identify himself with them as Loyola was doing. As an artist he belonged to the old order which was passing, as a Christian to the new order which was emerging. His position as a courtier, when the Augustan civility of the earlier Medici was being superseded by dynastic absolutism, complicated his difficulties. While accepting service in the modern spirit of subjection, he dreamed of masters who should be Mæcenases, and fondly imagined that poets might still live, like Petrarch, on terms of equality with princes.

We therefore see in Tasso one who obeyed influences to which his real self never wholly or consciously submitted. He was not so much out of harmony with his age as the incarnation of its still unharmonised contradictions. The pietism instilled into his mind at Naples ; the theories of art imbibed at Padua and Venice ; the classical lumber absorbed during his precocious course of academical studies ; the hypocritical employment of allegory to render sensuous poetry decorous ; the deference to critical opinion and the dictates of literary lawgivers ; the reverence for priests and princes interposed between the soul and God : these were principles which Tasso accepted without having properly assimilated and incorporated their substance into his spiritual being. What the poet in him really was, we perceive when he wrote, to use Dante's words, as Love dictates ; or as Plato said, when he submitted to the mania of the Muse ; or as Horace counselled, when he indulged his genius. It is in the 'Aminta,' in the episodes of the 'Gerusalemme,' in a small percentage of the 'Rime,' that we find the true Tasso. For the rest, he had not the advantages enjoyed by Boiardo and Ariosto in a less self-conscious age, of yielding to natural impulse after a full and sympathetic study of classical and medieval sources. The analytical labours of the previous century hampered his creativeness. He brought to his task preoccupations of divers and self-contradictory pedantries—pedantries of Catholicism, pedantries of scholasticism, pedantries of humanism in its exhausted phase, pedantries of criticism refined and subtilised within a narrow range of problems. He had, moreover, weighing on his native genius the fears which brooded like feverish exhalations over the evil days in which he lived—fears of Church-censure, fears of despotic princes, fears of the Inquisition, fears of hell, fears of the judgment of academies, fears of social custom and courtly conventionalities. Neither as poet nor as man had he

the courage of originality. What he lacked was character. He obeyed the spirit of his age, in so far as he did not, like young David, decline Saul's armour and enter into combat with Philistinism, wielding his sling and stone of native force alone. Yet that native force was so vigorous that, in spite of the panoply of prejudice he wore, in spite of the cumbrous armour lent him by authority, he moved at times with superb freedom. In those rare intervals of personal inspiration he dictated the love-tales of Erminia and Armida, the death-scene of Clorinda, the pastoral of Aminta and Silvia—episodes which created the music and the painting of two centuries, and which still live upon the lips of the people. But inasmuch as his genius laboured beneath the superincumbent weight of precedents and deferences, the poet's nature was strained to the uttermost and his nervous elasticity was overtaxed. No sooner had he poured forth freely what flowed freely from his soul, than he returned on it with scrupulous analysis. The product of his spirit stood before him as a thing to be submitted to opinion, as a substance subject to the test of all those pedantries and fears. We cannot wonder that the subsequent conflict perplexed his reason and sterilised his creative faculty to such an extent that he spent the second half of his life in attempting to undo the great work of his prime. The 'Gerusalemme Conquistata' and the 'Sette Giornate' are thus the splendid triumph achieved by the feebler over the stronger portions of his nature, the golden tribute paid by his genius to the evil genius of the age controlling him. He was a poet who, had he lived in the days of Ariosto, would have created in all senses spontaneously, producing works of Virgilian beauty and divine melancholy to match the Homeric beauty and the divine irony of his great peer. But this was not to be. The spirit of the times which governed his education, with which he was not revolutionary enough to break, which he strove as a critic to

assimilate and as a social being to obey, destroyed his independence, perplexed his judgment, and impaired his nervous energy. His best work was consequently of unequal value; pure and base metal mingled in its composition. His worst was a barren and lifeless failure.

CHAPTER IX

GIORDANO BRUNO

Scientific Bias of the Italians checked by Catholic Revival—Boyhood of Bruno—Enters Order of S. Dominic at Naples—Early Accusations of Heresy—Escapes to Rome—Teaches the Sphere at Noli—Visits Venice—At Geneva—At Toulouse—At Paris—His Intercourse with Henri III.—Visits England—The French Ambassador in London—Oxford—Bruno's Literary Work in England—Returns to Paris—Journeys into Germany—Wittenberg, Helmstädt, Frankfort—Invitation to Venice from Giovanni Mocenigo—His Life in Venice—Mocenigo denounces him to the Inquisition—His Trial at Venice—Removal to Rome—Death by Burning in 1600—Bruno's Relation to the Thought of his Age and to the Thought of Modern Europe—Outlines of his Philosophy.

The humanistic and artistic impulses of the Renaissance were at the point of exhaustion in Italy. Scholarship declined; the passion for antiquity expired. All those forms of literature which Boccaccio initiated—comedy, romance, the idyll, the lyric, and the novel—had been worked out by a succession of great writers. It became clear that the nation was not destined to create tragic or heroic types of poetry. Architecture, sculpture, and painting had performed their task of developing medieval motives by the light of classic models, and were now entering on the stage of academical inanity. Yet the mental vigour of the Italians was by no means exhausted. Early in the sixteenth century Machiavelli had inaugurated a new method for political philosophy; Pomponazzo at Padua and Telesio at Cosenza disclosed new horizons for psychology and the science of nature. It seemed as though the Renaissance in Italy were about to assume a

fresh and more serious character without losing its essential inspiration. That evolution of intellectual energy which had begun with the assimilation of the classics, with the first attempts at criticism, with the elaboration of style and the perfection of artistic form, now promised to invade the fields of metaphysical and scientific speculation. It is true, as we have seen, that the theological problems of the German Reformation took but slight hold on Italians. Their thinkers were already too far advanced upon the paths of modern rationalism to feel the actuality of questions which divided Luther from Zwingli, Calvin from Servetus, Knox from Cranmer. But they promised to accomplish master-works of incalculable magnitude in wider provinces of exploration and investigation. And had this progress not been checked, Italy would have crowned and completed the process commenced by humanism. In addition to the intellectual culture already given to Europe, she might have revealed right methods of mental analysis and physical research. For this further step in the discovery of man and of the world, the nation was prepared to bring an army of new pioneers into the field—the philosophers of the South, and the physicists of the Lombard universities.

Humanism effected the emancipation of intellect by culture. It called attention to the beauty and delightfulness of nature, restored man to a sense of his dignity, and freed him from theological authority. But in Italy, at any rate, it left his conscience, his religion, his sociological ideas, the deeper problems which concern his relation to the universe, the subtler secrets of the world in which he lives, untouched.

These *novi homines* of the later Renaissance, as Bacon called them, these *novatori*, as they were contemptuously styled in Italy, prepared the further emancipation of the intellect by science. They asserted the liberty of thought and speech, proclaimed the paramount authority of that inner

light or indwelling deity which man owns in his brain and breast, and rehabilitated nature from the stigma cast on it by Christianity. What the Bible was for Luther, that was the great Book of Nature for Telesio, Bruno, Campanella. The German reformer appealed to the reason of the individual as conscience; the school of Southern Italy made a similar appeal to intelligence. In different ways Luther and these speculative thinkers maintained the direct illumination of the human soul by God, man's immediate dependence on his Maker, repudiating ecclesiastical intervention, and refusing to rely on any principle but earnest love of truth.

Had this new phase of the Italian Renaissance been permitted to evolve itself unhindered, there is no saying how much earlier Europe might have entered into the possession of that kingdom of unprejudiced research which is now secured for us. But it was just at the moment when Italy became aware of the arduous task before her, that the Catholic reaction set in with all its rigour. The still creative spirit of her children succumbed to the Inquisition, the Congregation of the Index, the decrees of Trent, the intellectual submission of the Jesuits, the physical force of Spanish tyranny, and Roman absolutism. Carnesecchi was burned alive; Paleario was burned alive; Bruno was burned alive: these three at Rome. Vanini was burned at Toulouse. Valentino Gentile was executed by Calvinists at Berne. Campanella was cruelly tortured and imprisoned for twenty-seven years at Naples. Galileo was forced to humble himself before ignorant and arrogant monks, and to hide his head in a country villa. Sarpi felt the knife of an assassin, and would certainly have perished at the instigation of his Roman enemies but for the protection guaranteed him by the Signory of Venice. In this way did Italy—or rather, let us say, the Church which dominated Italy—devour her sons of light. It is my purpose in the present chapter to narrate the life of Bruno and to

give some account of his philosophy, taking him as the most illustrious example of the school exterminated by reactionary Rome.

Giordano Bruno was born in 1548 at Nola, an ancient Greek city close to Naples. He received the baptismal name of Filippo, which he exchanged for Giordano on assuming the Dominican habit. His parents, though people of some condition, were poor; and this circumstance may perhaps be reckoned the chief reason why Bruno entered the convent of S. Dominic at Naples before he had completed his fifteenth year. It will be remembered that Sarpi joined the Servites at the age of thirteen, and Campanella the Dominicans at that of fourteen. In each of these memorable cases it is probable that poverty had something to do with deciding a vocation so premature. But there were other inducements, which rendered the monastic life not unattractive to a young man seeking knowledge at a period and in a district where instruction was both costly and difficult to obtain. Campanella himself informs us that he was drawn to the order of S. Dominic by its reputation for learning and by the great names of S. Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus. Bruno possibly felt a similar attraction; for there is nothing in the temper of his mind to make us believe that he inclined seriously to the religious life of the cloister.

During his novitiate he came into conflict with the superiors of his convent for the first time. It was proved against him that he had given away certain images of saints, keeping only the crucifix; also that he had told a comrade to lay aside a rhymed version of the Seven Joys of Mary, and to read the lives of the Fathers of the Church instead. On these two evidences of insufficient piety, an accusation was prepared against him which might have led to serious results. But the master of the novices preferred to destroy the document, retaining only a memorandum of the fact for future use in

case of need.[1] Bruno, after this event, obeyed the cloistral discipline in quiet, and received priest's orders in 1572.

At this epoch of his life, when he had attained his twenty-fourth year, he visited several Dominican convents of the Neapolitan province, and entered, with the want of prudence which was habitual to him, into disputations on theology. Some remarks he let fall on transubstantiation and the Divinity of Christ exposed him to a suspicion of Arianism, a heresy at that time rife in Southern Italy. Bruno afterwards confessed that from an early age he had entertained speculative doubts upon the metaphysics of the Trinity, though he was always prepared to accept that dogma in faith as a good Catholic. The Inquisition took the matter up in earnest, and began to institute proceedings of so grave a nature that the young priest felt himself in danger. He escaped in his monk's dress, and travelled to Rome, where he obtained admittance for a short while to the convent of the Minerva.

We know very little what had been his occupations up to this date. It is only certain that he had already composed a comedy, 'Il Candelajo:' which furnishes sufficient proof of his familiarity with mundane manners. It is, in fact, one of the freest and most frankly satirical compositions for the stage produced at that epoch, and reveals a previous study of Aretino. Nola, Bruno's birthplace, was famous for the license of its country folk. Since the day of its foundation by Chalkidian colonists, its inhabitants had preserved their Hellenic traditions intact. The vintage, for example, was celebrated with an extravagance of obscene banter, which scandalised Philip II.'s viceroy in the sixteenth century.[2] During the period of Bruno's novitiate, the ordinances of the

[1] The final case drawn up against Bruno as heresiarch makes it appear that his record included even these boyish errors. See the letter of Gaspar Schopp in Berti.

[2] See 'Vita di Don Pietro di Toledo' (*Arch. Stor.* vol. ix. p. 23).

Council of Trent for discipline in monasteries were not yet in operation; and it is probable that throughout the thirteen years of his conventual experience, he mixed freely with the people and shared the pleasures of youth in that voluptuous climate. He was never delicate in his choice of phrase, and made no secret of the admiration which the beauty of women excited in his nature. The accusations brought against him at Venice contained one article of indictment implying that he professed distinctly profligate opinions; and though there is nothing to prove that his private life was vicious, the tenor of his philosophy favours more liberty of manners than the Church allowed in theory to her ministers.[1] It is of some importance to dwell upon this topic; for Bruno's character and temper, so markedly different from that of Sarpi, for example, affected in no small measure the form and quality of his philosophy. He was a poet, gifted with keen and lively sensibilities, open at all pores to the delightfulness of nature, recoiling from nothing that is human. At no period of his life was he merely a solitary thinker or a student of books. When he came to philosophise, when the spiritual mistress, Sophia, absorbed all other passions in his breast, his method of exposition retained a tincture of that earlier phase of his experience.

It must not be thought, however, that Bruno prosecuted no serious studies during this period. On the contrary, he seems to have amassed considerable erudition in various departments of learning: a fact which should make us cautious against condemning conventual education as of necessity narrow and pedantic. When he left Naples, he had acquired

[1] See the passage on polygamy in the *Spaccio della Bestia*. I may here remark that Campanella, though more orthodox than Bruno, published opinions upon the relations of the sexes analogous to those of Plato's *Republic* in his *Città del Sole*. He even recommended the institution of brothels as annexes to schools for boys, in order to avoid the worse evil of unnatural vice in youth.

sufficient knowledge of Aristotle and the Schoolmen, among whom he paid particular attention to S. Thomas and to Raymond Lully. Plato, as expounded by Plotinus, had taken firm hold on his imagination. He was versed in the dialectics of the previous age, had mastered medieval cosmography and mathematics, and was probably already acquainted with Copernicus. The fragments of the Greek philosophers, especially of Pythagoras and Parmenides, whose metaphysics powerfully influenced his mind, had been assimilated. Perhaps the writings of Cardinal Cusa, the theologian who applied mathematics to philosophy, were also in his hands at the same period. Beside Italian, he possessed the Spanish language, could write and speak Latin with fluency, and knew something of Greek. It is clear that he had practised poetry in the vernacular under the immediate influence of Tansillo. Theological studies had not been wholly neglected; for he left behind him at Naples editions of Jerome and Chrysostom with commentaries of Erasmus. These were books which exposed their possessors to the interdiction of the Index.

It seems strange that a Dominican, escaping from his convent to avoid a trial for heresy, should have sought refuge at S. Maria sopra Minerva, then the headquarters of the Roman Inquisition. We must, however, remember that much freedom of movement was allowed to monks, who found a temporary home in any monastery of their order. Without money, Bruno had no roof but that of a religious house to shelter him; and he probably reckoned on evading pursuit till the fatigues of his journey from Naples had been forgotten. At any rate, he made no lengthy stay in Rome. News soon reached him that the prosecution begun at Naples was being transferred to the metropolis. This implied so serious a danger that he determined to quit Rome in secret. Having flung his frock to the nettles, he journeyed—how, we do not

know—to Genoa, and thence to Noli on the Riviera. The next time Bruno entered the Dominican convent of S. Maria sopra Minerva, it was as a culprit condemned to death by the Inquisition.

At Noli, Bruno gained a living for about five months by teaching grammar to boys and lecturing in private to some gentlefolk upon the Sphere. The doctrine of the Sphere formed a somewhat miscellaneous branch of medieval science. It embraced the exposition of Ptolemaic astronomy, together with speculations on the locality of heaven, the motive principle of the world, and the operation of angelical intelligences. Bruno, who professed this subject at various times throughout his wanderings, began now to use it as a vehicle for disseminating Copernican opinions. It is certain that cosmography formed the basis of his philosophy, and this may be ascribed to his early occupation with the Sphere. But his restless spirit would not suffer him to linger in those regions where olive and orange and palm flourish almost more luxuriantly than in his native Nola. The gust of travel was upon him. A new philosophy occupied his brain, vertiginously big with incoherent births of modern thought. What Carlyle called 'the fire in the belly' burned and irritated his young blood. Unsettled, cast adrift from convent moorings, attainted for heresy, out of sympathy with resurgent Catholicism, he became a Vagus Quidam—a wandering student, like the Goliardi of the Middle Ages. From Noli he passed to Savona; from Savona to Turin; from Turin to Venice. There his feet might perhaps have found rest; for Venice was the harbour of all vagrant spirits in that age. But the city was laid waste with plague. Bruno wrote a little book, now lost, on 'The Signs of the Times,' and lived upon the sale of it for some two months. Then he removed to Padua. Here friends persuaded him to reassume the cowl. There were more than 40,000 monks abroad in Italy, beyond the limits of their

convent. Why should not he avail himself of house-roof in his travels, a privilege which was always open to friars? From Padua he journeyed rapidly again through Brescia, Bergamo, and Milan to Turin, crossed Mont Cenis, tarried at Chambéry, and finally betook himself to Geneva.

Geneva was no fit resting-place for Bruno. He felt an even fiercer antipathy for dissenting than for orthodox bigotry. The despotism of a belligerent and persecuting sectarian seemed to him more intolerable, because less excusable, than the Catholic despotism from which he was escaping. Galeazzo Caracciolo, Marquis of Vico, who then presided over the Italian refugees in Geneva, came to visit him. At the suggestion of this man Bruno once more laid aside his Dominican attire, and began to earn his bread by working as a reader for the press—a common resort of needy men of learning in those times. But he soon perceived that the Calvinistic stronghold offered no freedom, no security of life even, to one whose mind was bent on new developments of thought. After two months' residence on the shores of Lake Leman he departed for Toulouse, which he entered early in 1577.

We cannot help wondering why Bruno chose that city for his refuge. Toulouse, the only town in France where the Inquisition took firm root and flourished, Toulouse so perilous to Muret, so mortal to Dolet and Vanini, ought, one might have fancied, to have been avoided by an innovator flying from a charge of heresy.[1] Still it must be remembered that Toulouse was French. Italian influence did not reach so far. Nor had Bruno committed himself even in thought to open rupture with Catholicism. He held the opinion, so common at that epoch, so inexplicable to us now, that the same man

[1] On the city, university, and Inquisition of Toulouse in the sixteenth century see Christie's *Etienne Dolet*—a work of sterling merit and sound scholarship.

could countermine dogmatic theology as a philosopher, while he maintained it as a Christian. This was the paradox on which Pomponazzo based his apology, which kept Campanella within the pale of the Church, and to which Bruno appealed for his justification when afterwards arraigned before the Inquisitors at Venice.

It appears from his own autobiographical confessions that Bruno spent some six months at Toulouse, lecturing in private on the peripatetic psychology; after which time he obtained the degree of Doctor in Philosophy, and was admitted to a Readership in the university. This post he occupied two years. It was a matter of some moment to him that professors at Toulouse were not obliged to attend Mass. In his dubious position, as an escaped friar and disguised priest, to partake of the Sacrament would have been dangerous. Yet he now appears to have contemplated the possibility of reconciling himself to the Church, and resuming his vows in the Dominican order. He went so far as to open his mind upon this subject to a Jesuit; and afterwards at Paris he again resorted to Jesuit advice. But these conferences led to nothing. It may be presumed that the trial begun at Naples and removed to Rome, combined with the circumstances of his flight and recusant behaviour, rendered the case too grave for compromise. No one but the Pope in Rome could decide it.

There is no apparent reason why Bruno left Toulouse, except the restlessness which had become a marked feature in his character. We find him at Paris in 1579, where he at once began to lecture at the Sorbonne. It seems to have been his practice now in every town he visited, to combine private instruction with public disputation. His manners were agreeable; his conversation was eloquent and witty. He found no difficulty in gaining access to good society, especially in a city like Paris, which was then thronged

with Italian exiles and courtiers. Meanwhile his public lectures met with less success than his private teaching. In conversation with men of birth and liberal culture he was able to expound views fascinating by their novelty and boldness. Before an academical audience it behoved him to be circumspect; nor could he transgress the formal methods of scholastic argumentation.

Two principal subjects seem to have formed the groundwork of his teaching at this period. The first was the doctrine of the Thirty Divine Attributes, based on S. Thomas of Aquino. The second was Lully's Art of Memory and Classification of the Sciences. This twofold material he worked up into a single treatise, called 'De Umbris Idearum,' which he published in 1582 at Paris, and which contains the germ of all his leading speculations. Bruno's metaphysics attracted less attention than his professed Art of Memory. In an age credulous of occult science, when men believed that power over nature was being won by alchemy and magic, there was no difficulty in persuading people that knowledge might be communicated in its essence, and that the faculties of the mind could be indefinitely extended, without a toilsome course of study. Whether Bruno lent himself wittingly to any imposture in his exposition of mnemonics, cannot be asserted. But it is certain that the public were led to expect from his method more than it could give.

The fame of his Art of Memory reached the King's ears; and Henri III. sent for him. 'The King,' says Bruno, 'had me called one day, being desirous to know whether the memory I possessed and professed was natural or the result of magic art. I gave him satisfaction; by my explanations and by demonstrations to his own experience, convincing him that it was not an affair of magic but of science.' Henri, who might have been disappointed by this result, was taken with his teacher, and appointed him Reader Extraordinary—a post

that did not oblige Bruno to hear Mass. The Ordinary Readers at Paris had to conform to the usages of the Catholic Church. On his side, Bruno appears to have conceived high admiration for the King's ability. In the 'Cena delle Ceneri' and the 'Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante,' composed and published after he had left France, he paid him compliments in terms of hyperbolical laudation. It would be vain to comment on these facts. No one conversant with French society at that epoch could have been ignorant of Henri's character and vicious life. No one could have pretended that his employment of the kingdom's wealth to enrich unworthy favourites was anything but dishonourable, or have maintained that his flagrant effeminacy was beneficial to society. The fantastic superstition which the King indulged alternately with sensual extravagances, must have been odious to one whose spiritual mistress was divine Sophia, and whose religion was an adoration of the intellect for the One Cause. But Henri had one quality which seemed of supreme excellence to Bruno. He appreciated speculation and encouraged men of learning. A man so enthusiastic as our philosopher may have thought that his own teaching could expel that Beast Triumphant of the vices from a royal heart tainted by bad education in a corrupt Court. Bruno, moreover, it must be remembered, remained curiously inappreciative of the revolution effected in humanity by Christian morals. Much that is repulsive to us in the manners of the Valois, may have been indifferent to him.

Bruno had just passed his thirtieth year. He was a man of middling height, spare figure, and olive complexion, wearing a short chestnut-coloured beard. He spoke with vivacity and copious rhetoric, aiming rather at force than at purity of diction, indulging in trenchant metaphors to adumbrate recondite thoughts, passing from grotesque images to impassioned flights of declamation, blending acute arguments and

pungent satires with grave mystical discourses. The impression of originality produced by his familiar conversation rendered him agreeable to princes. There was nothing of the pedant in his nature, nothing about him of the doctor but his title.

After a residence of rather less than four years in Paris, he resolved upon a journey to England. Henri supplied him with letters of introduction to the French ambassador in London, Michel de Castelnau de la Mauvissière. This excellent man, who was then attempting to negotiate the marriage of Elizabeth with the Duke of Anjou, received Bruno into his own family as one of the gentlemen of his suite. Under his roof the wandering scholar enjoyed a quiet home during the two years which he passed in England—years that were undoubtedly the happiest, as they were the most industrious, of his chequered life. It is somewhat strange that Bruno left no trace of his English visit in contemporary literature. Seven of his most important works were printed in London, though they bore the impress of Paris and Venice—for the very characteristic reason that English people only cared for foreign publications. Four of these, on purely metaphysical topics, were dedicated to Michel de Castelnau; two, treating of moral and psychological questions, the famous 'Spaccio della Bestia' and 'Gli Eroici Furori,' were inscribed to Sidney The 'Cena delle Ceneri' describes a supper party at the house of Fulke Greville; and it is clear from numerous allusions scattered up and down these writings, that their author was admitted on terms of familiarity to the best English society. Yet no one mentions him. Fulke Greville in his 'Life of Sidney' passes him by in silence; nor am I aware that any one of Sidney's panegyrists, the name of whom is legion, alludes to the homage paid him by the Italian philosopher.

On his side, Bruno has bequeathed to us animated pictures of his life in London, portraying the English of that period

as they impressed a sensitive Italian.[1] His descriptions are valuable, since they dwell on slight particulars unnoticed by ambassadors in their despatches. He was much struck with the filth and unkempt desolation of the streets adjacent to the Thames, the rudeness of the watermen who plied their craft upon the river, and the stalwart beef-eating brutality of prentices and porters. The population of London displayed its antipathy to foreigners by loud remarks, hustled them in narrow lanes, and played at rough and tumble with them after the manners of a bear-garden. But there is no hint that these big fellows shouldering through the crowd were treacherous or ready with their knives. The servants of great houses seemed to Bruno discourteous and savage; yet he says nothing about such subtlety and vice as rendered the retainers of Italian nobles perilous to order. He paints the broad portrait of a muscular and insolently insular people, untainted by the evils of corrupt civilisation. Mounting higher in the social scale, Bruno renders deserved homage to the graceful and unaffected manners of young English noblemen, from whom he singles Sidney out as the star of cultivated chivalry.[2] What he says about the well-born youth of England, shows that the flower of our gentlefolk delighted Southern observers by their mixture of simplicity and sweetness with good breeding and sound sense. For the ladies of England he cannot find words fair enough to extol the beauties of their persons and the purity of their affections. Elizabeth herself he calls a goddess, *diva*, using phrases which were afterwards recited in the terms of his indictment before the Inquisition. What pleased him most in England was the

[1] The 'Cena delle Ceneri,' *Op. It.* vol. i. pp. 137–151.

[2] Signor Berti conjectures that Bruno may have met Sidney first at Milan. But Bruno informs us that he did not become acquainted with him till he came to London: 'Tra' quali è tanto conosciuto, per fama prima quando eravamo in Milano et in Francia, e poi per experienza or che siamo ne la sua patria' (*Op. It.* vol. i. p. 145).

liberty of speech and thought he there enjoyed.[1] Society was so urbane, government was so unsuspicious, that a man could venture to call things by their proper names and speak his heart out without reserve. That Bruno's panegyric was not prompted by any wish to flatter national vanity, is proved by the hard truths he spoke about the grossness of the people, and by his sarcasms on Oxford pedants. He also ventured to condemn in no unmeasured terms some customs which surprised him in domestic intercourse. He drew, for instance, a really gruesome picture of the loving-cup, as it passed round the table, tasted by a mixed assemblage.[2]

A visit paid by Bruno to Oxford forms a curious episode in his English experiences. He found that university possessed by pedants and ignorant professors of the old learning. 'Men of choice,' he calls them, 'trailing their long velvet gowns, this one arrayed with two bright chains of gold around his neck, that one, good heavens! with such a valuable hand—twelve rings upon two fingers, giving him the look of some rich jeweller.'[3] These excellent dons, blest in the possession of fat fellowships, felt no sympathy for an eccentric interloper of Bruno's stamp. They allowed him to lecture on the Soul and the Sphere. They even condescended to dispute with him. Yet they made Oxford so unpleasant a place of residence that after three months he returned to London. The treatment he experienced rankled in his memory. 'Look where you like at the present moment, you will find but doctors in grammar here; for in this happy realm there reigns a constellation of pedantic stubborn ignorance and presumption mixed with a rustic incivility that would disturb Job's patience. If you do not believe it, go to Oxford, and ask to hear what happened to the Nolan, when he disputed publicly with those doctors of theology in the presence of the

[1] Preface to 'Lo Spaccio della Bestia' (*Op. It.* vol. ii. p. 108).
[2] *Op. It.* vol. i. p. 150.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 123.

Polish Prince Alasco.[1] Make them tell you how they answered to his syllogisms; how the pitiful professor, whom they put before them on that grave occasion as the Coryphæus of their university, bungled fifteen times with fifteen syllogisms, like a chicken in the stubble. Make them tell you with what rudeness and discourtesy that pig behaved; what patience and humanity he met from his opponent, who, in truth, proclaimed himself a Neapolitan, born and brought up beneath more genial heavens. Then learn after what fashion they brought his public lectures to an end, those on the Immortality of the Soul and those on the Quintuple Sphere.' [2] The Soul and the Sphere were Bruno's favourite themes. He handled both at this period of life with startling audacity. They had become for him the means of ventilating speculations on terrestrial movement, on the multiplicity of habitable worlds, on the principle of the universe, and on the infinite modes of psychical metamorphosis. Such topics were not calculated to endear him to people of importance on the banks of Isis. That he did not humour their prejudices, appears from a Latin epistle which he sent before him by way of introduction to the Vice-Chancellor.[3] It contains these pompous phrases: Philotheus Jordanus Brunus Nolanus magis laboratae theologiae doctor, purioris et innocuae sapientiae professor. In praecipuis Europae academiis notus, probatus et honorifice exceptus philosophus. Nullibi praeterquam apud barbaros et ignobiles peregrinus. Dormitantium animarum excubitor. Praesuntuosae et recalcitrantis ignorantiae domitor. Qui in actibus universis generalem philantropiam protestatur. Qui non magis Italum quam Britannum, marem quam foeminam, mitratum quam coronatum, togatum quam armatum, cucullatum hominem quam

[1] See Wood, *Ath. Oxon.* p. 300.
[2] *Op. It.* vol. i. p. 179.
[3] Printed in the *Explicatio triginta Sigillarum.*

sine cucullo virum : sed illum cujus pacatior, civilior, fidelior et utilior est conversatio diligit.' Which may thus be Englished : ' Giordano Bruno of Nola, the God-loving, of the more highly wrought theology doctor, of the purer and harmless wisdom professor. In the chief universities of Europe known, approved, and honourably received as philosopher. Nowhere save among barbarians and the ignoble a stranger. The awakener of sleeping souls. The trampler upon presuming and recalcitrant ignorance. Who in all his acts proclaims a universal benevolence toward man. Who loveth not Italian more than Briton, male than female, mitred than crowned head, gowned than armed, frocked than frockless ; but seeketh after him whose conversation is the more peaceful, more civil, more loyal, and more profitable.' This manifesto, in the style of a mountebank, must have sounded like a trumpet-blast to set the humdrum English doctors with sleepy brains and mouldy science on their guard against a man whom they naturally regarded as an Italian charlatan. What, indeed, was this more highly wrought theology, this purer wisdom ? What call had this self-panegyrist to stir souls from comfortable slumbers ? What right had he to style the knowledge of his brethren ignorance ? Probably he was but some pestilent fellow, preaching unsound doctrine on the Trinity, like Peter Martyr Vermigli, who had been properly hissed out of Oxford a quarter of a century earlier. When Bruno arrived and lectured, their worst prognostications were fulfilled. Did he not maintain a theory of the universe which even that perilous speculator and political schemer, Francis Bacon, sneered at as nugatory ?

In spite of academical opposition, Bruno enjoyed fair weather, halcyon months, in England. His description of the Ash Wednesday Supper at Fulke Greville's, shows that a niche had been carved out for him in London, where he occupied a pedestal of some importance. Those gentlemen of

Elizabeth's Court did not certainly exaggerate the value of their Italian guest. In Italy, most of them had met with spirits of Bruno's stamp, whom they had not time or opportunity to prove. He was one among a hundred interesting foreigners; and his martyrdom had not as yet set the crown of glory or of shame upon his forehead. They probably accepted him as London society of the present day accepts a theosophist from Simla or Thibet. But his real home at this epoch, the only home, so far as I can see, that Bruno ever had, after he left his mother at the age of thirteen for a convent, was the house of Castelnau. The truest chords in the Italian's voice vibrate when he speaks of that sound Frenchman. To Mme. de Castelnau he alludes with respectful sincerity, paying her the moderate and well-weighed homage which, for a noble woman, is the finest praise. There is no rhetoric in the words he uses to express his sense of obligation to her kindness. They are delicate, inspired with a tact which makes us trust the writer's sense of fitness.[1] But Bruno indulges in softer phrases, drawn from the heart, and eminently characteristic of his predominant enthusiastic mood, when he comes to talk of the little girl, Marie, who brightened the home of the Castelnaus. 'What shall I say of their noble-natured daughter? She has gazed upon the sun barely one lustre and one year; but so far as language goes, I know not how to judge whether she springs from Italy or France or England! From her hand, touching the instruments of music, no man could reckon if she be of corporate or incorporeal substance. Her perfected goodness makes one marvel whether she be flown from heaven, or be a creature of this common earth. It is at least evident to every man that for the shaping of so fair a body the blood of both her parents has contributed, while for the tissue of her rare spirit the virtues of their heroic souls have been combined.'[2]

[1] *Op. It.* vol. i. p. 267. [2] *Loc. cit.* p. 267

It was time to leave these excellent and hospitable friends. 'Forth from the tranquil to the trembling air' Bruno's unquiet impulse drove him. He returned to Paris at the end of 1585, disputed before the Sorbonne with some success of scandal, and then, disquieted by the disorders of the realm, set out for Germany. We find him at Marburg in the following year, ill-received by the university, but welcomed by the Prince. Thence we follow him to Mainz, and afterwards to Wittenberg, where he spent two years. Here he conceived a high opinion of the Germans. He foresaw that when they turned their attention from theology to science and pure speculation, great results might be expected from their solid intellectual capacity. He seems in fact to have taken a pretty accurate measure of the race as it has subsequently shown itself. Wittenberg he called the German Athens. Luther, he recognised as a hero of humanity, who, like himself, defied authority in the defence of truth. Yet he felt no sympathy for the German reformers. When asked by the Inquisitors at Venice what he thought about these men, he replied: 'I regard them as more ignorant than I am. I despise them and their doctrines. They do not deserve the name of theologians, but of pedants.' That this reply was sincere, is abundantly proved by passages in the least orthodox of Bruno's writings. It was the weakness of a philosopher's position at that moment that he derived no support from either of the camps into which Christendom was then divided. Catholics and Protestants of every shade regarded him with mistrust.

A change in the religious policy of Saxony, introduced after the death of the Elector Augustus, caused Bruno to leave Wittenberg for Prague in 1588. From Prague he passed to Helmstädt, where the Duke Heinrich Julius of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel received him with distinction, and

bestowed on him a purse of eighty dollars.[1] Here he conceived two of his most important works, the 'De Monade' and 'De Triplici Minimo,' both written in Latin hexameters.[2] Why he adopted this new form of exposition is not manifest. Possibly he was tired of dialogues, through which he had expressed his thought so freely in England. Possibly a German public would have been indifferent to Italian. Possibly he was emulous of his old masters, Parmenides and Lucretius.

At Helmstädt he came into collision with Boetius, the rector of the Evangelical church, who issued a sentence of excommunication against him. Like a new Odysseus, he set forth once again upon his voyage, and in the spring of 1590 anchored in Frankfort on the Main. A convent (that of the Carmelites) sheltered him in this city, where he lived on terms of intimacy with the printers Wechel and Fischer, and other men of learning. It would appear from evidence laid before the Venetian Inquisitors that the prior of the monastery judged him to be a man of genius and doctrine, devoid of definite religion, addicted to fantastic studies, and bent on the elaboration of a philosophy that should supersede existing creeds.[3] This was a not inaccurate portrait of Bruno as he then appeared to conservatives of commonplace capacity. Yet nothing occurred to irritate him in the shape of persecution or disturbance. Bruno worked in quiet at Frankfort, pouring forth thousands of metaphysical verses, some at least of which were committed to the press in three volumes published by the Wechels.

Between Frankfort and Italy literary communications

[1] It is a curious fact that the single copy of Campanella's poems on which Orelli based his edition of 1834, came from Wolfenbüttel.

[2] They were published at Frankfort, and dedicated to the friendly Prince of Wolfenbüttel.

[3] Britanno's Deposition, Berti's *Vita di G. B.* p. 337.

were kept open through the medium of the great fair, which took place every year at Michaelmas.[1] Books formed one of the principal commodities, and the Italian bibliopoles travelled across the Alps to transact business on these important occasions. It happened by such means that a work of Bruno's, perhaps the 'De Monade,' found its way to Venice.[2] Exposed on the counter of Giambattista Ciotto, then plying the trade of bookseller in that city, this treatise met the eyes of a Venetian gentleman called Giovanni Mocenigo. He belonged to one of the most illustrious of the still surviving noble families in Venice. The long line of their palaces upon the Grand Canal has impressed the mind of every tourist. One of these houses, it may be remarked, was occupied by Lord Byron, who, had he known of Bruno's connexion with the Mocenighi, would undoubtedly have given to the world a poem or a drama on the fate of our philosopher. Giovanni Mocenigo was a man verging on middle life, superstitious, acknowledging the dominion of his priest, but alive in a furtive way to perilous ideas. Morally, he stands before us as a twofold traitor: a traitor to his Church, so long as he hoped to gain illicit power by magic arts; a traitor to his guest, so soon as he discovered that his soul's risk brought himself no profit.[3] He seems to have imagined that Bruno might teach him occult science, or direct him on a royal way to knowledge without strenuous study. Subsequent events proved that, though he had no solid culture, he was fascinated by the expectation

[1] Sarpi mentions the return of Ciotto from this fair (*Lettere*, vol. i. p. 327).

[2] Ciotto, before the Inquisition, called the book *De Minimo Magno et Mensura*. It may therefore have been the *De Triplici Minimo et Mensura*, and not the *De Monade* (*Vita di G. B.* p. 334).

[3] Mocenigo told Ciotto: 'I wish first to see what I can get from him of those things which he promised me, so as not wholly to lose what I have given him, and afterwards I mean to surrender him to the censure of the Holy Office' (Berti, p. 335).

of discovering some great secret. It was the vice of the age to confound science with sorcery, and Bruno had lent himself to this delusion by his whimsical style. Perhaps the booksellers, who then played a part scarcely less prominent than that of the barbers in diffusing gossip, inflamed Mocenigo's curiosity by painting the author of the puzzling volume in seductive colours. Anyhow, this man sent two letters, one through Ciotto, and one direct to Bruno, praying him to visit Venice, professing his desire for instruction, and offering him an honourable place of residence.

In an evil hour Bruno accepted this invitation. No doubt he longed to see Italy again after so many years of exile. Certainly he had the right to believe that he would find hospitality and a safe refuge in Venice. Had not a Venetian noble pledged his word for the former? Was not the latter a privilege which S. Mark extended to all suppliants? The Republic professed to shield even the outlaws of the Inquisition, if they claimed her jurisdiction. There was therefore no palpable imprudence in the step which Bruno now took. Yet he took it under circumstances which would have made a cautious man mistrustful. Of Mocenigo he knew merely nothing. But he did know that writs from the Holy Office had been out against himself in Italy for many years, during which he had spent his time in conversing with heretics and printing works of more than questionable orthodoxy.[1] Nothing proves the force of the vagrant's impulse which possessed Bruno, more than his light and ready consent to Giovanni Mocenigo's proposal.

He set off at once from Frankfort, leaving the MS. of one of his metaphysical poems in Wechel's hands to print, and

[1] Mere correspondence with heretics exposed an Italian to the Inquisition. Residence in heretical lands, except with episcopal license, was forbidden. The rules of the Index proscribed books in which the name of a heretic was cited with approval.

found himself at the end of 1591 a guest of his unknown patron. I have already described what Mocenigo hoped to gain from Bruno—the arts of memory and invention, together with glimpses into occult science.[1] We know how little Bruno was able to satisfy an insatiable curiosity in such matters. One of his main weaknesses was a habit of boasting and exaggerating his own powers, which at first imposed upon a vulgar audience and then left them under the impression that he was a charlatan. The bookseller Ciotto learned from students who had conversed with him at Frankfort, that 'he professed an art of memory and other secrets in the sciences, but that all the persons who had dealt with him in such matters, had left him discontented.'[2] Another weakness in his character was extraordinary want of caution. Having lived about the world so long, and changed from town to town, supporting himself as he best could, he had acquired the custom of attracting notice by startling paradoxes. Nor does he seem to have cared to whom he made the dangerous confidence of his esoteric beliefs. His public writings, presumably composed with a certain circumspection—since everybody knows the proverb, *litera scripta manet*—contain such perilous stuff that (when we consider what their author may have let fall in unguarded conversation) we are prepared to credit the charges brought against him by Mocenigo. For it must now be said that this man, 'induced by the obligation of his conscience and by order of his confessor,' denounced Bruno to the Inquisition on May 23, 1592.

When the two men, so entirely opposite in their natures, first came together, Bruno began to instruct his patron in the famous art of memory and mathematics. At the same time

[1] Bruno speaks himself of 'arte della memoria et inventiva' (*op. cit.* p. 339). Ciotto mentions 'la memoria et altre scientie' (*ib.* p. 334).

[2] *Op. cit.* p. 335.

he discoursed freely and copiously, according to his wont, upon his own philosophy. Mocenigo took no interest in metaphysics, and was terrified by the audacity of Bruno's speculations. It enraged him to find how meagre was Bruno's vaunted method for acquiring and retaining knowledge without pains. In his secret heart he believed that the teacher whom he had maintained at a considerable cost was withholding the occult knowledge he so much coveted. Bruno, meanwhile, attended Andrea Morosini's receptions in the palace at S. Luca, and frequented those of Bernardo Secchini at the sign of the Golden Ship in the Merceria. He made friends with scholars and men of fashion; absented himself for weeks together at Padua; showed that he was tired of Mocenigo; and ended by rousing that man's suspicious jealousy. Mocenigo felt that he had been deceived by an impostor, who, instead of furnishing the wares for which he bargained, put him off with declamations on the nature of the universe. What was even more terrible, he became convinced that this charlatan was an obstinate heretic.

Whether Bruno perceived the gathering of the storm above his head, whether he was only wearied with the importunities of his host, or whether, as he told the Inquisitors, he wished to superintend the publication of some books at Frankfort, does not greatly signify. At any rate, he begged Mocenigo to excuse him from further attendance, since he meant to leave Venice. This happened on Thursday, May 21. Next day, Mocenigo sent his body-servant, together with five or six gondoliers, into Bruno's apartment, seized him, and had him locked up in a ground-floor room of the palace. At the same time he laid hands on all Bruno's effects, including the MS. of one important treatise 'On the Seven Liberal Arts,' which was about to be dedicated to Pope Clement VIII. This, together with other unpublished works, exists probably in the Vatican Archives, having been sent with the papers

referring to Bruno's trial from Venice when he was transported to Rome. The following day, which was a Saturday, Mocenigo caused Bruno to be carried to one of those cellars (*magazzeni terreni*) which are used in Venice for storing wood, merchandise or implements belonging to gondolas. In the evening, a Captain of the Council of Ten removed him to the dungeons of the Inquisition. On the same day, May 23, Mocenigo lodged his denunciation with the Holy Office.

The heads of this accusation, extracted from the first report and from two subsequent additions made by the delator, amount to these. Though Bruno was adverse to religions altogether, he preferred the Catholic to any other; but he believed it to stand in need of thorough reform. The doctrines of the Trinity, the miraculous birth of Christ, and transubstantiation, were insults to the Divine Being. Christ had seduced the people by working apparent miracles. So also had the Apostles. To develop a new philosophy which should supersede religions, and to prove his superiority in knowledge over S. Thomas and all the theologians, was Bruno's cherished scheme. He did not believe in the punishment of sins; but held a doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and of the generation of the human soul from refuse. The world he thought to be eternal. He maintained that there were infinite worlds, all made by God, who wills to do what he can do, and therefore produces infinity. The religious orders of Catholicism defile the earth by evil life, hypocrisy, and avarice. All friars are only asses. Indulgence in carnal pleasures ought not to be reckoned sinful. The man confessed to having freely satisfied his passions to the utmost of his opportunities.

On being questioned before the Inquisitors, Mocenigo supported these charges. He added that when he had threatened Bruno with delation, Bruno replied, first, that he did not believe he would betray his confidence by making

private conversation the groundwork of criminal charges; secondly, that the utmost the Inquisition could do, would be to inflict some penance and force him to resume the cowl. These, which are important assertions, bearing the mark of truth, throw light on his want of caution in dealing with Mocenigo, and explain the attitude he afterwards assumed before the Holy Office.

Mocenigo's accusations in the main yield evidences of sincerity. They are exactly what we should expect from the distortion of Bruno's doctrines by a mind incapable of comprehending them. In short, they are as veracious as the image of a face reflected on a spoon. Certain gross details (the charges, for example, of having called Christ a *tristo* who was deservedly hung, and of having sneered at the virginity of Mary) may possible have emanated from the delator's own imagination.[1] Bruno emphatically repudiated these; though some passages in his philosophical poems, published at Frankfort, contain the substance of their blasphemies. A man of Mocenigo's stamp probably thought that he was faithfully representing the heretic's views, while in reality he was drawing his own gross conclusions from sceptical utterances about the origins of Christianity which he obscurely understood. It does not seem incredible, however, that Bruno, who was never nice in his choice of language, and who certainly despised historical Christianity, let fall crude witticisms upon such and other points in Mocenigo's presence.

Bruno appeared before the Venetian Inquisition on May 29. His examination was continued at intervals from this date till July 30. His depositions consist for the most part of an autobiographical statement which he volunteered, and of a frank elucidation of his philosophical doctrines in

[1] They remind us of the blasphemies imputed to Christopher Marlowe.

their relation to orthodox belief. While reading the lengthy pages of his trial, we seem to overhear a man conversing confidentially with judges from whom he expected liberal sympathy. Over and over again, he relies for his defence upon the old distinction between philosophy and faith, claiming to have advocated views as a thinker which he does not hold as a Christian. 'In all my books I have used philosophical methods of definition according to the principles and light of nature, not taking chief regard of that which ought to be held in faith; and I believe they do not contain anything which can support the accusation that I have professedly impugned religion rather than that I have sought to exalt philosophy; though I may have expounded many impieties based upon my natural light.'[1] In another place he uses the antithesis, 'speaking like a Christian and according to theology'—'speaking after the manner of philosophy.'[2] The same antithesis is employed to justify his doctrine of metempsychosis: 'Speaking as a Catholic, souls do not pass from one body into another, but go to paradise or purgatory or hell; yet, following philosophical reasonings, I have argued that, the soul being inexistent without the body and inexistent in the body, it can be indifferently in one or in another body, and can pass from one into another, which, if it be not true, seems at any rate probable according to the opinion of Pythagoras.'[3] That he expected no severe punishment appears from the terms of his so-called recantation. 'I said that I wished to present myself before the feet of his Holiness with certain books which I approve, though I have published others which I do not now approve; whereby I meant to say that some works composed and published by me do not meet with my approbation, inasmuch as in these I have spoken and discussed too philosophically, in unseemly wise, not altogether as a good Christian ought; in

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 352. [2] *Ibid.* p. 355. [3] *Ibid.* p. 362.

particular I know that in some of these works I have taught and philosophically held things which ought to be attributed to the power, wisdom, and goodness of God according to the Christian faith, founding my doctrine in such matters on sense and reason, not upon faith.'[1] At the very end of his examination, he placed himself in the hands of his judges, 'confessing his errors with a willing mind,' acknowledging that he had 'erred and strayed from the Church,' begging for such castigation as shall not 'bring public dishonour on the sacred robe which he had worn,' and promising to 'show a noteworthy reform, and to recompense the scandal he had caused by edification at least equal in magnitude.'[2] These professions he made upon his knees, evincing clearly, as it seems to me, that at this epoch he was ready to rejoin the Dominican order, and that, as he affirmed to Mocenigo, he expected no worse punishment than this.

In attempting to estimate Bruno's recantation, we must remember that he felt no sympathy at all for heretics. When questioned about them, he was able to quote passages from his own works in which he called the Reformation a Deformation of religion.[3] Lutheran and Calvinist theologians were alike pedants in his eyes.[4] There is no doubt that Bruno meant what he said; and had he been compelled to choose one of the existing religions, he would have preferred Catholicism. He was, in fact, at a period of life when he wished to dedicate his time in quiet to metaphysical studies. He had matured his philosophy and brought it to a point at which he thought it could be presented as a peace-offering to the Supreme Pontiff. Conformity to ecclesiastical observances seemed no longer irksome to the world-experienced, wide-reaching mind of the man. Nor does he appear to have anticipated that his formal submission would not be readily

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 349.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 384.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 364.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 363.

accepted. He reckoned strangely, in this matter, without the murderous host into whose clutches he had fallen.

Searching interrogations touching other heads in the evidence against him, as blasphemous remarks on sacred persons, intercourse with heretics, abuse of the religious orders, dealings in magic arts, licentious principles of conduct, were answered by Bruno with a frank assurance, which proves his good conscience in essentials and his firm expectation of a favourable issue to the affair. Mocenigo had described him as *indemoniato*; and considering the manifest peril in which he now stood, there is something scarcely sane in the confidence he showed. For Mocenigo himself he reserved words of bitterest scorn and indignation. When questioned in the usual terms whether he had enemies at Venice, he replied: 'I know of none but Ser Giovanni Mocenigo and his train of servants. By him I have been grievously injured, more so than by living man, seeing he has murdered me in my life, my honour, and my property, having imprisoned me in his own house and stolen all my writings, books, and other effects. And this he did because he not only wished that I should teach him everything I know, but also wished to prevent my teaching it to anyone but him. He has continued to threaten me upon the points of life and honour, unless I should teach him everything I knew.' [1]

The scene closes over Bruno in the Venetian Inquisition on July 30, 1592. We do not behold him again till he enters the Minerva at Rome to receive his death-sentence on February 9, 1600. What happened in the interval, is almost a blank. An exchange of letters took place between Rome and Venice concerning his extradition, and the Republic made some show of reluctance to part with a refugee within its jurisdiction. But this diplomatic affair was settled to the satisfaction of both parties, and Bruno disappeared into the

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 378.

dungeons of the Roman Inquisition in the month of January 1593.

Seven years of imprisonment was a long period.[1] We find it hard to understand why Bruno's prosecution occupied the Holy Office through this space of time. But conjectures on the subject are now useless. Equally futile is it to speculate whether Bruno offered to conform in life and doctrine to the Church at Rome as he had done at Venice. The temptation to do so must have been great. Most probably he begged for grace, but grace was not accorded on his own terms; and he chose death rather than dishonour and a lie in the last resort, or rather than life-long incarceration. It is also singular that but few contemporaries mention the fact of his condemnation and execution. Rome was crowded in the jubilee year of 1600. Bruno was burned in open daylight on the Campo di Fiora. Yet the only eye-witness who records the event is Gaspar Schoppe, or Scioppius, who wrote a letter on the subject to his friend Rittershausen. Kepler, eight years afterwards, informed his correspondent Breugger that Bruno had been really burned: 'he bore his agonising death with fortitude, abiding by the asseveration that all religions are vain, and that God identifies himself with the world, circumference and centre.' Kepler, it may be observed, conceived a high opinion of Bruno's speculations, and pointed him out to Galileo as the man who had divined the infinity of solar systems in their correlation to one infinite order of the universe.[2]

[1] These years were not all spent at Rome. From the Records of the Inquisition, it appears that he arrived in Rome on February 27, 1598, and that his trial in form began in February 1599. The Pope ratified his sentence of death on January 20, 1600; this was publicly promulgated on February 8, and carried into effect on the subsequent 17th. Where Bruno was imprisoned between January 1593, and February 1598, is not known.

[2] Doubts have recently been raised as to whether Bruno was really

Scioppius was a German humanist of the elder Italianated type, an elegant Latin stylist, who commented indifferently on the 'Priapeia' and the Stoic philosophy. He abjured Protestantism, and, like Muretus, sold his pen to Rome. The Jesuits, in his pompous panegyric, were first saluted as 'the prætorian cohort of the camp of God.' Afterwards, when he quarrelled with their Order, he showered invectives on them in the manner of a Poggio or Filelfo. The literary infamies of the fifteenth century reappeared in his polemical attacks on Protestants, and in his satires upon Scaliger. Yet he was a man of versatile talents and considerable erudition. It must be mentioned in his honour that he visited Campanella in his prison, and exerted himself for his liberation. Campanella dedicated his 'Atheismus Triumphatus' to Scioppius, calling him 'the dawn-star of our age.' Schoppe was also the first credible authority to warn Sarpi of the imminent peril he ran from Roman hired assassins, as I shall relate in my chapter upon Sarpi's life. This man's letter to his friend is the single trustworthy document which we possess regarding the last hours of Bruno. Its inaccuracies on minor points may be held to corroborate his testimony.

Scioppius refers to Bruno's early heresies on transubstantiation and the virginity of Mary. He alludes to the 'Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante,' as though it had been a libel on the Pope.[1] He then enumerates Bruno's heterodox opinions,

burned. But these are finally disposed of by a succinct and convincing exposition of the evidence by Mr. R. C. Christie, in *Macmillan's Magazine*, October 1885. In addition to Schoppe and Kepler, we have the reference to Bruno's burning published by Mersenne in 1624; but what is far more important, the *Avviso di Roma* for February 19, 1600, records this event as having occurred upon the preceding Thursday. To Signor Berti's two works, *Documenti intorno a G. Bruno* (Roma, 1880), and *Copernico e le vicende*, &c. (Roma, 1876), we owe most of the material which has been lucidly sifted by Mr. R. C. Christie.

[1] 'Londinum profectus, libellum istic edit de Bestia triumphante, h. e. de Papa, quem vestri honoris causa bestiam appellare solent.'

which had been recited in the public condemnation pronounced on the heresiarch. 'Horrible and most utterly absurd are the views he entertained, as, for example, that there are innumerable worlds; that the soul migrates from body to body, yea into another world, and that one soul can inform two bodies; that magic is good and lawful; that the Holy Spirit is nothing but the Soul of the World, which Moses meant when he wrote that it brooded on the waters; that the world has existed from eternity; that Moses wrought his miracles by magic, being more versed therein than the Egyptians, and that he composed his own laws; that the Holy Scriptures are a dream, and that the devils will be saved; that only the Jews descend from Adam and Eve, the rest of men from that pair whom God created earlier; that Christ is not God, but that he was an eminent magician who deluded mankind, and was therefore rightly hanged, not crucified; that the prophets and Apostles were men of naught, magicians, and, for the most part, hanged: in short, without detailing all the monstrosities in which his books abound, and which he maintained in conversation, it may be summed up in one word that he defended every error that has been advanced by pagan philosophers or by heretics of earlier and present times.' Accepting this list as tolerably faithful to the terms of Bruno's sentence, heard by Scioppius in the hall of the Minerva, we can see how Mocenigo's accusation had been verified by reference to his published works. The 'De Monade' and 'De Triplici' contain enough heterodoxy to substantiate each point.

On February 9, Bruno was brought before the Holy Office at S. Maria sopra Minerva. In the presence of assembled Cardinals, theologians, and civil magistrates, his heresies were first recited. Then he was excommunicated, and degraded from his priestly and monastic offices. Lastly, he was handed over to the secular arm, 'to be punished with all clemency and without effusion of blood.' This meant in plain language to

be burned alive. Thereupon Bruno uttered the memorable and monumental words: 'Peradventure ye pronounce this sentence on me with a greater fear than I receive it.' They were the last words he spoke in public. He was removed to the prisons of the State, where he remained eight days, in order that he might have time to repent. But he continued obdurate. Being an apostate priest and a relapsed heretic, he could hope for no remission of his sentence. Therefore, on February 17, he marched to a certain and horrible death. The stake was built up on the Campo di Fiora. Just before the wood was set on fire, they offered him the crucifix.[1] He turned his face away from it in stern disdain. It was not Christ but his own soul, wherein he believed the Deity resided, that sustained Bruno at the supreme moment. No cry, no groan, escaped his lips. Thus, as Scioppius affectedly remarked, 'he perished miserably in flames, and went to report in those other worlds of his imagination, how blasphemous and impious men are handled by the Romans.'

Whatever we may think of the good taste of Bruno's sarcasms upon the faith in which he had been bred—and it is certain that he never rightly apprehended Christianity in its essence—there is no doubt he died a valiant martyr to the truth as he conceived it. 'His death like that of Paleario, Carnesecchi, and so many more, no less than countless exiles suffered for religious causes, are a proof that in Italy men had begun to recognise their obligation to a faith, the duty of obedience to a thought: an immense progress, not sufficiently appreciated even by modern historians.'[2] Bruno was a hero in the battle for the freedom of the conscience, for the right of man to think and speak in liberty.[3]

[1] We may remember that while a novice at Naples, he first got into trouble by keeping the crucifix as the only religious symbol which he respected, when he parted with images of saints.

[2] These pregnant words are in Berti's *Vita di G. B.* p. 299.

[3] He well deserves this name, in spite of his recantation at Venice

Just five years before this memorable 17th of February, Tasso had passed quietly away in S. Onofrio. 'How dissimilar in genius and fortune,' exclaims Berti, 'were these men, though born under the same skies, though in childhood they breathed the same air! Tasso a Christian and poet of the cross; Bruno hostile to all religious symbols. The one, tired and disillusioned of the world, ends his days in the repose of the convent; the other sets out from the convent to expire upon the scaffold, turning his eyes away from the crucifix.'[1] And yet how much alike in some important circumstances of their lives were these two men! Both wanderers, possessed by that spirit of vagrancy which is the outward expression of an inner restlessness. The unfrocked friar, the courtier out of service, had no home in Italy. Both were pursued by an oestrum corresponding to the intellectual perturbations which closed the sixteenth century, so different from the idyllic calm that rested upon Ariosto and the artists of its opening years. Sufficient justice has not yet been done in history to the Italian wanderers and exiles of this period, men who carried the spirit of the Renaissance abroad, after the Renaissance had ended in Italy, to the extremest verges of the civilised world. An enumeration of their names, an examination of their services to modern thought, would show how puissant was the intellectual influence of Italy in that period of her political decadence.[2]

Bruno has to be treated from two distinct but interdepend-

for it seems incredible that he could not by concessions have purchased life. As Breugger wrote with brutal crudity to Kepler: 'What profit did he gain by enduring such torments? If there were no God to punish crimes, as he believed, could he not have pretended anything to save his life?' We may add that the alternative to death for a relapsed apostate was perpetual incarceration; and seven years of prison may well have made Bruno prefer death with honour.

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 70.

[2] Both Berti and Quinet have made similar remarks, which, indeed, force themselves upon a student of the sixteenth century.

ent points of view—in his relation to contemporary thought and the Renaissance; and in his relation to the evolution of modern philosophy—as the critic of medieval speculation and the champion of sixteenth-century enthusiasm; and also as the precursor of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Schelling, Hegel, Darwin.

From the former of these two points of view Bruno appears before us as the man who most vitally and comprehensively grasped the leading tendencies of his age in their intellectual essence. He left behind him the medieval conception of an extra-mundane God, creating a finite world, of which this globe is the centre, and the principal episode in the history of which is a series of events from the Fall, through the Incarnation and Crucifixion, to the Last Judgment.[1] He substituted the conception of an ever-living, ever-acting, ever-self-effectuating God, immanent in an infinite universe, to the contemplation of whose attributes the mind of man ascends by study of Nature and interrogation of his conscience. The rehabilitation of the physical world and of humanity as part of its order, which the Renaissance had already indirectly effected through the medium of arts and literature and modes of life, found in Bruno an impassioned metaphysical supporter. He divinised Nature, not by degrading the Deity to matter, but by lifting matter to participation in the divine existence. The Renaissance had proclaimed the dignity of man considered as a mundane creature, and not in his relation to a hypothetical other-world. It abundantly manifested the beauty and the joy afforded by existence on this planet, and laughingly discarded past theological determinations to the contrary of its new Gospel. Bruno undertook the systematisation of Renaissance intuitions; declared the divine reality of Nature and of man;

[1] This theological conception of history inspired the sacred drama of the Middle Ages, known to us as Cyclical Miracle Plays.

demonstrated that we cannot speculate God, cannot think ourselves, cannot envisage the universe, except under the form of one living, infinite, eternal, divinely sustained and soul-penetrated complex. He repudiated authority of every sort, refusing to acknowledge the decrees of the Church, freely criticising past philosophers, availing himself of all that seemed to him substantial in their speculations, but appealing in the last resort to that inner witness, that light of reason, which corresponds in the mental order to conscience in the moral. As he deified Nature, so he emancipated man as forming with Nature an integral part of the Supreme Being. He was led upon this path to combat Aristotle and to satirise Christian beliefs, with a subtlety of scholastic argumentation and an acerbity of rhetoric that now pass for antiquated. Much that is obsolete in his writings must be referred to the polemical necessities of an age enthralled by peripatetic conceptions, and saturated with the ecclesiastical divinity of the schoolmen. These forces of the philosophy he sought to supersede, had to be attacked with their own weapons, and by methods adapted to the spirit of his age. Similar judgment may be passed upon his championship of the Copernican system. That system was the pivot of his metaphysic, the revelation to which he owed his own conception of the universe. His strenuous and ingenious endeavours to prove its veracity, his elaborate and often-repeated refutations of the Ptolemaic theory, appear to modern minds superfluous. But we must remember what a deeply penetrating, widely working revolution Copernicus effected in cosmology, how he dislocated the whole fabric upon which Catholic theology rested, how new and unintelligible his doctrine then seemed, and what vast horizons he opened for speculation on the destinies of man. Bruno was the first fully to grasp the importance of the Copernican hypothesis, to perceive its issues, and to adapt it to the formation of a new ontology. Copernicus, though

he proclaimed the central position of the sun in our system, had not ventured to maintain the infinity of the universe. For him, as for the elder physicists, there remained a sphere of fixed stars enclosing the world perceived by our senses within walls of crystal. Bruno broke those walls, and boldly asserted the now recognised existence of numberless worlds in space illimitable. His originality lies in the clear and comprehensive notion he formed of the Copernican discovery, and in his application of its corollaries to the Renaissance apocalypse of deified nature and emancipated man. The deductions he drew were so manifold and so acute that they enabled him to forecast the course which human thought has followed in all provinces of speculation.

This leads us to consider how Bruno is related to modern science and philosophy. The main point seems to be that he obtained a vivid mental picture (*Vorstellung*) of the physical universe, differing but little in essentials from that which has now come to be generally accepted. In reasoning from this concept as a starting-point, he formed opinions upon problems of theology, ontology, biology, and psychology, which placed him out of harmony with medieval thought, and in agreement with the thought of our own time. Why this was so, can easily be explained. Bruno, first of all philosophers, adapted science, in the modern sense of that term, to metaphysic. He was the first to perceive that a revolution in our conception of the material universe, so momentous as that effected by Copernicus, necessitated a new theology and a new philosophical method. Man had ceased to be the centre of all things; this globe was no longer 'the hub of the universe,' but a small speck floating on infinity. The Christian scheme of the Fall and the Redemption, if not absolutely incompatible with the new cosmology, was rendered by it less conceivable in any literal sense. Some of the main points on which the early Christians based their faith, and

which had hardened into dogmas through the course of centuries—such, for instance, as the Ascension and the Second Advent—ceased to have their old significance. In a world where there was neither up nor down, the translation of a corporeal Deity to some place above the clouds, whence he would descend to judge men at the last day, had only a grotesque or a symbolic meaning; whereas to the first disciples, imbued with theories of a fixed celestial sphere, it presented a solemn and apparently well-founded expectation. The fundamental doctrine of the Incarnation, in like manner, lost intelligibility and value, when God had to be thought no longer as the Creator of a finite cosmos, but as a Being commensurate with infinity. It was clear to a mind so acute as Bruno's that the dogmas of the Church were correlated to a view of the world which had been superseded; and he drew the logical inference that they were at bottom but poetical and popular adumbrations of the Deity in terms concordant with erroneous physical notions. Aristotle and Ptolemy, the masters of philosophy and cosmography based upon a theory of the universe as finite and circumscribed within fixed limits, lent admirable aid to the theological constructions of the Middle Ages. The Church, adopting their science, gave metaphysical and logical consistency to those earlier poetical and popular conceptions of the religious sense. The *naïf* hopes and romantic mythologies of the first Christians stiffened into syllogisms and ossified in the huge fabric of the 'Summa.' But Aristotle and Ptolemy were now dethroned. Bruno, in a far truer sense than Democritus before him,

> extra
> Processit longe flammantia moenia mundi.

Bolder even than Copernicus, and nearer in his intuition to the truth, he denied that the universe had 'flaming walls' or any walls at all. That 'immaginata circonferenza,' 'quella

margine immaginata del cielo,' on which antique science and Christian theology alike reposed, was the object of his ceaseless satire, his oft-repeated polemic. What, then, rendered Bruno the precursor of modern thought in its various manifestations, was that he grasped the fundamental truth upon which modern science rests, and foresaw the conclusions which must be drawn from it. He speculated boldly, incoherently, vehemently; but he speculated with a clear conception of the universe, as we still apprehend it. Through the course of three centuries we have been engaged in verifying the guesses, deepening, broadening and solidifying the hypotheses, which Bruno's extension of the Copernican theory, and his application of it to pure thought, suggested to his penetrating and audacious intellect.

Bruno was convinced that religion in its higher essence would not suffer from the new philosophy. Larger horizons extended before the human intellect. The soul expanded in more exhilarating regions than the old theologies had offered. The sense of the Divine in Nature, instead of dwindling down to atheism, received fresh stimulus from the immeasurable prospect of an infinite and living universe. Bruno, even more than Spinoza, was a God-intoxicated man. The inebriation of the Renaissance, inspired by golden visions of truth and knowledge close within man's grasp, inflamed with joy at escaping from outworn wearying formulæ into what appeared to be the simple intuition of an everlasting verity, pulses through all his utterances. He has the same cherubic confidence in the renascent age, that charms us in the work of Rabelais. The slow, painful, often thwarted, ever more dubious elaboration of modern metaphysic in *rapport* with modern science—that process which, after completing the cycle of all knowledge and sounding the fathomless depth of all ignorance, has left us in grave disillusionment and sturdy patience—swam before Bruno in a rapturous vision. The

Inquisition and the stake put an end abruptly to his dream. But the dream was so golden, so divine, that it was worth the pangs of martyrdom. Can we say the same for Hegel's system, or for Schopenhauer's, or for the encyclopædic ingenuity of Herbert Spencer?

Bruno imagined the universe as infinite space, filled with ether, in which an infinite number of worlds, or solar systems resembling our own, composed of similar materials and inhabited by countless living creatures, move with freedom. The whole of this infinite and complex cosmos he conceived to be animated by a single principle of thought and life. This indwelling force, or God, he described in Platonic phraseology sometimes as the Anima Mundi, sometimes as the Artificer, who by working from within moulds infinite substance into an infinity of finite modes. Though we are compelled to think of the world under the two categories of spirit and matter, these apparently contradictory constituents are for ever reconciled and harmonised in the divine existence, whereof illimitable activity, illimitable volition, and illimitable potentiality are correlated and reciprocally necessary terms. In Aristotelian language, Bruno assumed infinite form and infinite matter as moments of an eternal process, by which the infinite unity manifests itself in concrete reality. This being the case, it follows that nothing exists which has not life, and is not part of God. The universe itself is one immeasurable animal, or animated Being. The solar systems are huge animals; the globes are lesser animals; and so forth down to the monad of molecular cohesion. As the universe is infinite and eternal, motion, place, and time do not qualify it; these are terms applicable only to the finite parts of which it is composed. For the same reason nothing in the universe can perish. What we call birth and death, generation and dissolution, is only the passage of the infinite and homogeneous entity through successive phases of finite and differentiated

existence; this continuous process of exchange and transformation being stimulated and sustained by attraction and repulsion, properties of the indwelling divine soul aiming at self-realisation.

Having formed this conception, Bruno supported it by metaphysical demonstration, and deduced conclusions bearing on psychology, religion, ethics. Much of his polemic was directed against the deeply rooted notion of a finite world derived from Aristotle. Much was devoted to the proof of the Copernican discovery. Orthodox theology was indirectly combated or plausibly caressed. There are consequently many pages in his dialogues which do not interest a modern reader, seeing that we have outlived the conditions of thought that rendered them important. In the process of his argument, he established the theory of a philosophical belief, a religion of religions, or 'religione della mente,' as he phrased it, prior to and comprehensive of all historical creeds. He speculated, as probabilities, the transmigration of souls, and the interchangeability of types in living creatures. He further postulated a concordance between the order of thought and the order of existence in the universe, and inclined to the doctrine of necessity in morals. Bruno thus obtained *per saltum* a prospect over the whole domain of knowledge subsequently traversed by rationalism in metaphysics, theology, and ethics. In the course of these demonstrations and deductions he anticipated Descartes' position of the identity of mind and being. He supplied Spinoza with the substance of his reasoned pantheism; Leibnitz with his theory of monadism and pre-established harmony. He laid down Hegel's doctrine of contraries, and perceived that thought was a dialectic process. The modern theory of evolution was enunciated by him in pretty plain terms. He had grasped the physical law of the conservation of energy. He solved the problem of evil by defining it to be a relative condition of

imperfect development. He denied that Paradise or a Golden Age is possible for man, or that, if possible, it can be considered higher in the moral scale than organic struggle toward completion by reconciliation of opposites through pain and labour. He sketched in outline the comparative study of religions, which is now beginning to be recognised as the proper basis for theology. Finally, he had a firm and vital hold upon that supreme speculation of the universe, considered no longer as the battleground of dual principles, or as the finite fabric of an almighty designer, but as the self-effectuation of an infinite unity, appearing to our intelligence as spirit and matter—that speculation which in one shape or another controls the course of modern thought.[1]

It must not be supposed that Bruno apprehended these points with distinctness, or that he expressed them precisely in the forms with which we are familiar. The hackneyed metaphor of a Pisgah view across the promised land applies to him with singular propriety. Moreover, as an acute critic has remarked, things old and new are so curiously blended in his writings that what at first sight appears modern, is often found upon reflection to be antique, and what is couched in obsolete scholastic terminology, turns out upon analysis to contain the germs of advanced theories.[2] The peculiar forms adopted for the exposition of his thoughts contribute to the

[1] It was my intention to support the statements in this paragraph by translating the passages which seem to me to justify them; and I had gone so far as to make English versions of some twenty pages in length, when I found that this material would overweight my book. A study of Bruno as the great precursor of modern thought in its more poetical and widely synthetic speculation must be left for a separate essay. Here I may remark that the most faithful and pithily condensed abstract of Bruno's philosophy is contained in Goethe's poem *Proömium zu Gott und Welt.* Yet this poem expresses Goethe's thought, and it is doubtful whether Goethe had studied Bruno except in the work of his disciple Spinoza.

[2] Spaventa in his *Saggi di Critica.*

difficulty of obtaining a methodical view of Bruno's philosophy. It has, therefore, been disputed whether he was a pantheist or an atheist, a materialist or a spiritualist, a mystic or an agnostic. No one would have contended more earnestly than Bruno himself, that the sage can hold each and all of these apparent contradictions together, with the exception of atheism; which last is a simple impossibility.

The fragmentary and impassioned exposition which Bruno gave to his opinions in a series of Italian dialogues and Latin poems will not discourage those of his admirers who estimate the conspicuous failure made by all elaborate system-builders from Aristotle to Hegel. To fathom the mystery of the world, and to express that mystery in terms of logic, is clearly beyond the faculty of man. Philosophies that aim at universe-embracing, God-explaining, nature-elucidating, man-illuminating comprehensiveness, have justly, therefore, become objects of suspicion. The utmost that man can do, placed as he is at obvious disadvantages for obtaining a complete survey of the whole, is to whet his intelligence upon confessedly insoluble problems, to extend the sphere of his practical experience, to improve his dominion over matter, to study the elevation of his moral nature, and to encourage himself for positive achievements by the indulgence in those glorious dreams from which regenerative creeds and inspiring philosophies have sprung—

> Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
> And ever moving as the restless spheres.

Faith and poetry are the highest regions in which his spirit can profitably move. The study of government, law, and social ethics, the analysis of physical conditions to which he is subject, and over which he has an undefined, though limited, control, form the practical sphere of his intelligence. Bruno traversed these regions; and, forasmuch as the outcome of his exploration was no system, but a congeries of

poetic visions, shrewd guesses, profound intuitions, and passionate enthusiasms, bound together and sustained by a burning sense of the Divine unity in nature and in man, we may be permitted to regard him as more fortunate than those cloud-castle-builders whose classifications of absolute existences are successively proved by the advance of relative knowledge to be but catalogues of some few objects apprehended by the vision of each partially instructed age. We have, indeed, reason to marvel how many of Bruno's intuitions have formed the stuff of later more elaborated systems, and still remain the best which these contain. We have reason to wonder how many of his divinations have worked themselves into the common fund of modern beliefs, and have become philosophical truisms.

It is probable that if Bruno's career had not been cut short by the dungeon and the stake at the comparatively early age of fifty-two, he might have produced some final work in which his theories would have assumed a formal shape. It is possible that the Vatican even now contains the first sketch for such a studied exposition in the treatise on the Seven Arts, which Giovanni Mocenigo handed over to the Inquisition, and which the philosopher intended to dedicate to Clement VIII. But the loss of this elaborated system is hardly to be regretted, except for the clearer light it must have thrown upon the workings of the most illuminated intellect in the sixteenth century. We know that it could not have revealed to us the secret of things.

Bruno cast his thoughts in two moulds: the dialogue, and Latin hexameters. He was attracted to the latter by his early study of Parmenides and Lucretius. The former seems to have been natural to the man. We must not forget that he was a Neapolitan, accustomed from childhood to the farces of his native land, vividly alive to the comic aspects of existence, and joyously appreciative of reality. His first known

composition was a comedy. 'Il Candelajo;' and something of the drama can be traced in all those Italian compositions which distinguish the period of his activity as an author in London. Lucian rather than Plato or Cicero determined the form of his dialogue. An element of the burlesque distinguishes his method of approaching religious and moral problems in the 'Spaccio della Bestia,' and the 'Cavallo Pegaseo.' And though he exchanged the manner of his model for more serious exposition in the trio of metaphysical dialogues, named 'La Cena delle Ceneri,' 'Della Causa,' and 'Dell' Infinito Universo,' yet the irresistible tendency to dramatic satire emerges even there in the description of England and in the characters of the indispensable pedant-buffoon. His dialogue on the 'Eroici Furori' is sustained at a high pitch of aspiring fervour. Mystical in its attempt to adumbrate the soul's thirst for truth and beauty, it adopts the method of a running commentary upon poems, in the manner of a discursive and fantastic 'Vita Nuova.' In his Italian style, Bruno owed much to the fashion set by Aretino. The study of Aretino's comedies is apparent in 'Il Candelajo.' The stringing together of words and ideas in triplets, balanced by a second set of words and ideas in antithetical triplets—this trick of rhetoric, which wearies a modern reader of his prose, seems to have been copied straight from Aretino. The coinage of fantastic titles, of which 'Lo Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante' contributed in some appreciable degree to Bruno's martyrdom, should be ascribed to the same influence. The source of these literary affectations was a bad one. Aretino, Doni, and such folk were no fit masters for Giordano Bruno even in so slight a matter as artistic form. Yet, in this respect, he shared a corrupt taste which was common to his generation, and proved how fully he represented the age in which he lived. It is not improbable that the few contemporary readers of his works, especially in euphuistic

England, admired the gewgaws he so plentifully scattered and rendered so brilliant by the coruscations of his wit. When, however, the real divine oestrum descends upon him, he discards those follies. Then his language, like his thought, is all his own: sublime, impassioned, burning, turbid; instinct with a deep volcanic fire of genuine enthusiasm. The thought is simple; the diction direct; the attitude of mind and the turn of expression are singularly living, surprisingly modern. We hear the man speak, as he spoke at Fulke Greville's supper-party, as he spoke at Oxford, as he spoke before the Sorbonne, as he might be speaking now. There is no air of literary effort, no tincture of antiquated style, in these masculine utterances.

CHAPTER X

FRA PAOLO SARPI

Sarpi's Position in the History of Venice—Parents and Boyhood—Entrance into the Order of the Servites—His Personal Qualities—Achievements as a Scholar and Man of Science—His Life among the Servites—In Bad Odour at Rome—Paul V. places Venice under Interdict—Sarpi elected Theologian and Counsellor of the Republic—His Polemical Writings—Views on Church and State—The Interdict Removed—Roman Vengeance—Sarpi attacked by *Bravi*—His Wounds, Illness, Recovery—Subsequent History of the Assassins—Further Attempts on Sarpi's Life—Sarpi's Political and Historical Works—History of the Council of Trent—Sarpi's Attitude towards Protestantism—His Judgment of the Jesuits—Sarpi's Death—The Christian Stoic.

Fra Paolo was the son of Francesco Sarpi and Isabella Morelli, Venetians of the humbler middle class. He was born in 1552, christened Pietro, and nicknamed Pierino because of his diminutive stature. On entering the Order of the Servites he adopted the religious name of Paolo, which he subsequently rendered famous throughout Europe. Since he died in 1623, Sarpi's life coincided with a period of supreme interest and manifold vicissitudes in the decline of Venice. After the battle of Lepanto in 1571, he saw the nobles of S. Mark welcome their victorious admiral Sebastiano Veniero, and confer on him the honours of the Dogeship. In 1606, he aided the Republic to withstand the thunders of the Vatican and defy the excommunication of a Pope. Eight years later he attended at those councils of state which unmasked the conspiracy, known as Bedmar's, to destroy Venice. In his

early manhood Cyprus had been wrested from the hands of S. Mark; and inasmuch as the Venetians alone sustained the cause of Christian civilisation against Turk and pirate in the Eastern seas, he was able before his death to anticipate the ruin which the war of Candia subsequently brought upon his country. During the last eighteen years of his existence Sarpi was the intellect of the Republic; the man of will and mind who gave voice and vigour to her policy of independence; the statesman who most clearly penetrated the conditions of her strength and weakness. This friar incarnated the Venetian spirit at a moment when, upon the verge of decadence, it had attained self-consciousness; and so instinctively devoted are Venetians to their State that in his lifetime he was recognised by them as hero, and after his death venerated as saint.

No sooner had the dispute with Paul V. been compromised, than Sarpi noticed how the aristocracy of Venice yielded themselves to sloth and political indifference. The religious obsequiousness to Rome and the 'peace or rather cowardice of slaves,' which were gradually immersing Italy in mental torpor and luxurious idleness, invaded this last stronghold of freedom. Though Sarpi's Christian Stoicism and practical sagacity saved him from playing the then futile part of public agitator, his private correspondence shows how low his hope had sunk for Italy. Nothing but a general war could free her from the yoke of arrogant Rome and foreign despotism. Meanwhile the Papal Court, Spain, and the House of Austria, having everything to lose by contest, preserved the peace of Italy at any cost. Princes whose petty thrones depended on Spanish and Papal good-will, dreaded to disturb the equilibrium of servitude; the population, dulled by superstition, emasculated by Jesuitical corruption and intimidated by Church tyranny, slumbered in the gross mud-honey of slavish pleasures. From his cell in the convent of the

Servites Sarpi swept the whole political horizon, eagerly anticipating some dawn-star of deliverance. At one time his eyes rested on the Duke of Savoy; but that unquiet spirit failed to steer his course clear between Spanish and French interests, Roman jealousies, and the ill-concealed hostilities of Italian potentates. At another time, like all lovers of freedom throughout Europe, he looked with confidence to Henri IV. But a fanatic's dagger, sharpened by the Jesuits, cut short the monarch's life and gave up France to the government of astute Florentine adventurers. Germany was too distracted by internal dissensions, Holland too distant and preoccupied with her own struggle for existence, to offer immediate aid. It was in vain that Sarpi told his foreign correspondents that the war of liberty in Europe must be carried into the stronghold of absolutism. To secure a victory over the triple forces of Spain, the Papal Court, and Jesuitry, Rome had to be attacked in Italy. His reasoning was correct. But peoples fighting for freedom on their native soil could not risk an adventure which only some central power of the first magnitude like France might have conducted with fair prospect of success. In the meantime what Sarpi called the Diacatholicon, that absolutist alliance of Rome, Spain, and Austria, supported by the Inquisition and the Jesuits, accepted by the States of Italy, and firmly rooted in some parts of Germany, invaded even those provinces where the traditions of independence still survived. After 1610 the Jesuits obtained possession of France; and though they did not effect their re-entrance into Venice, the ruling classes of the Republic allowed themselves to be drugged by the prevalent narcotic. Venice, too, was fighting for her life in the Adriatic and the Levant, while her nobles became daily more supine in aristocratic leisure, more papalising in their private sympathies. Thus the last years of Sarpi's life were overclouded by a deep discouragement, which did not, indeed,

extinguish his trust in the Divine Providence or his certain belief that the right would ultimately prevail, but which adds a tragic interest to the old age of this champion of political and moral liberty fallen on evil days.

I have thought it well to preface what I have to say about Sarpi with this forecast of his final attitude. As the Italian who most clearly comprehended the full consequences of the Catholic Revival, and who practically resisted what was evil for his nation in that reactionary movement, he demands a prominent place in this book. On his claims to scientific discoveries and his special service rendered to the Venetian Republic it will suffice to touch but lightly.

Sarpi's father was short of stature, brown-complexioned, choleric and restless. His mother was tall, pale, lymphatic, devoted to religious exercises and austerities. The son of their ill-assorted wedlock inherited something of both temperaments. In his face and eyes he resembled his mother; and he derived from her the piety which marked his course through life. His short, spare person, his vivid, ever-active intellect testified to the paternal impress. This blending of two diverse strains produced in him a singular tenacity of fibre. Man's tenement of clay has rarely lodged a spirit so passionless, so fine, so nearly disembodied. Of extreme physical tenuity, but gifted with inexhaustible mental energy, indefatigable in study, limitless in capacity for acquiring and retaining knowledge, he accentuated the type which nature gave him by the sustained habits of a lifetime. In diet he abstained from flesh and abhorred wine. His habitual weaknesses were those of one who subdues the body to mental government. As costive as Scaliger,[1] Sarpi suffered from hepatic hemorrhage, retention of urine, prolapsus recti, and

[1] We may remind our readers of Henri IV.'s parting words to Joseph Scaliger: 'Est-il vrai que vous avez été de Paris à Dijon sans aller à la selle?'

hemorrhoids. Intermittent fevers reduced his strength, but rarely interfered with his activity. He refused to treat himself as an invalid, never altered his course of life for any illness, and went about his daily avocations when men of laxer tissue would have taken to their bed. His indifference to danger was that of the Stoic or the Mussulman. During a period of fifteen years he knew that restless foes were continually lying in wait to compass his death by poison or the dagger. Yet he could hardly be persuaded to use the most ordinary precautions. 'I am resolved,' he wrote, in 1609, 'to give no thought whatever to these wretchednesses. He who thinks too much of living knows not how to live well. One is bound to die once; to be curious about the day or place or manner of dying is unprofitable. Whatsoever is God's will is good.'[1] As fear had no hold upon his nature, so was he wholly free from the dominion of the senses. A woman's name, if we except that of the Queen of France, is, I think, not once mentioned in his correspondence. Even natural affections seem to have been obliterated; for he records nothing of his mother or his father or a sister who survived their deaths. One suit of clothes sufficed him; and his cell was furnished with three hour-glasses, a picture of Christ in the Garden, and a crucifix raised above a human skull. His physical sensitiveness, developed by austerity of life, was of the highest acuteness. Sight, touch, and taste in him acquired the most exquisite delicacy. He was wont to say that he feared no poison in his food, since he could discriminate the least adulteration of natural flavours. His mental perspicacity was equally subtle. As a boy he could recite thirty lines of Virgil after hearing them read over once. Books were not so much perused by him as penetrated at a glance; and what he had but casually noticed, never afterwards escaped his memory. In the vast Venetian

[1] *Lettere*, vol. i. p. 239.

archives he could lay his hand on any document without referring to registers or catalogues. The minutest details of houses visited or places passed through, remained indelibly engraved upon his memory. The characters of men lay open to his insight through their physiognomy and gestures. When new scientific instruments were submitted to his curiosity, he divined their uses and comprehended their mechanism without effort. Thus endowed with a rare combination of physical and intellectual faculties, it is no wonder that Sarpi became one of the most learned men of his age or of any age. He was an excellent Greek, Latin, and Hebrew scholar; an adequate master of the French and Spanish languages; profoundly versed in canon and civil law; accomplished in the erudition of classical and scholastic philosophy; thoroughly acquainted with secular and ecclesiastical history. Every branch of mathematics and natural science had been explored by him with the enthusiasm of a pioneer. He made experiments in chemistry, mechanics, mineralogy, metallurgy, vegetable and animal physiology. His practical studies in anatomy were carried on by the aid of vivisection. Following independent paths, he worked out some of Gilbert's discoveries in magnetism, and of Da Porta's in optics, demonstrated the valves of the veins, and the function of the uvea in vision, divined the uses of the telescope and thermometer. When he turned his attention to astronomy, he at once declared the futility of judicial astrology; and while recognising the validity of Galileo's system, predicted that this truth would involve its promulgator in serious difficulties with the Roman Inquisition. In his treatises on psychology and metaphysics, he originated a theory of sensationalism akin to that of Locke. There was, in fact, no field of knowledge which he had not traversed with the energy of a discoverer. Only to poetry and *belles lettres* he paid but little heed, disdaining the puerilities of rhetoric then in

vogue, and using language as the simplest vehicle of thought. In conversation he was reticent, speaking little, but always to the purpose, and rather choosing to stimulate his collocutors than to make display of eloquence or erudition. Yet his company was eagerly sought, and he delighted in the society, not only of learned men and students, but of travellers, politicians, merchants, and citizens of the world. His favourite places of resort were the saloons of Andrea Morosini, and the shop of the Secchini at the sign of the Nave d' Oro. Here, after days spent in religious exercises, sacerdotal duties, and prolonged studies, he relaxed his mind in converse with the miscellaneous crowd of eminent persons who visited Venice for business or pleasure. A certain subacid humour, combining irony without bitterness, and proverbial pungency without sententiousness, added piquancy to his discourse. We have, unfortunately, no record of the wit-encounters which may have taken place under Morosini's or Secchini's roof between this friar, so punctual in his religious observances, so scrupulously pure in conduct, so cold in temperament, so acute in intellect, so modest in self-esteem, so cautious, so impermeable, and his contemporary, Bruno, the unfrocked friar of genius more daring but less sure, who was mentally in all points, saving their common love of truth and freedom, the opposite to Sarpi.

Sarpi entered the Order of the Servi, or Servants of the Blessed Virgin, at the age of fourteen, renewed his vows at twenty, and was ordained priest at twenty-two.[1] His great

[1] It was under the supervision of the Servites that Sarpi gained the first rudiments of education. Thirst for knowledge may explain his early entrance into their brotherhood. Like Virgil and like Milton, he received among the companions of his youthful studies the honourable nickname of 'The Maiden.' Gross conversation, such as lads use, even in convents, ceased at his approach. And yet he does not seem to have lost influence among his comrades by the purity which marked him out as exceptional.

worth brought him early into notice, and he filled posts of considerable importance in his Order. Several years of his manhood were spent in Rome, transacting the business and conducting the legal causes of the fathers. At Mantua he gained the esteem of Guglielmo Gonzaga. At Milan he was admitted to familiar intimacy with the sainted Carlo Borromeo, who consulted him upon matters of reform in the diocese, and insisted on his hearing confessions. This duty was not agreeable to Sarpi; and though he habitually in after life said Mass and preached, he abstained from those functions of the priesthood which would have brought him into close relation with individuals. The bent of his mind rendered him averse to all forms of superstition and sacerdotal encroachments upon the freedom of the conscience. As he fought the battle of political independence against ecclesiastical aggression, so he maintained the prerogatives of personal liberty. The arts whereby Jesuits gained hold on families and individuals, inspired in him no less disgust than the illegal despotism of the Papacy. This blending of sincere piety and moral rectitude with a passion for secular freedom and a hatred of priestly craft, has something in it closely akin to the English temperament. Sarpi was a sound Catholic Christian in religion, and in politics what we should call a staunch Whig. So far as it is now possible to penetrate his somewhat baffling personality, we might compare him to a Macaulay of finer edge, to a Dean Stanley of more vigorous build. He was less commonplace than the one, more substantial than the other. But we must be cautious in offering any interpretation of his real opinions. It was not for nothing that he dedicated himself to the monastic life in boyhood, and persevered in it to the end of his long career. The discipline of the convent renders every friar inscrutable; and Sarpi himself assured his friends that he, like all Italians of his day, was bound to wear a mask.[1]

[1] *Lettere*, vol. i. p. 237.

Be this as it may, Sarpi was not the man to work his way by monkish intrigue or courtly service into high place either in his Order or the Church. Long before he unsheathed the sword in defence of Venetian liberties, he had become an object of suspicion to Rome and his superiors. Some frank words which escaped him in correspondence, regarding the corruption of the Papal Curia, closed every avenue to office. Men of less mark obtained the purple. The meanest and poorest bishoprics were refused to Sarpi. He was thrice denounced, on frivolous charges, to the Inquisition; but on each occasion the indictment was dismissed without a hearing. The General of the Servites accused him of wearing cap and slippers uncanonical in cut, and of not reciting the 'Salve Regina.' After a solemn trial, Sarpi was acquitted; and it came to be proverbially whispered that 'even the slippers of the incorruptible Fra Paolo had been canonised.' Being a sincere Catholic at heart, as well as a man of profound learning and prudent speech, his papalistic enemies could get no grip upon him. Yet they instinctively hated and dreaded one whom they felt to be opposed, in his strength, fearlessness, and freedom of soul, to their exorbitant pretensions and underhand aggressions upon public liberties. His commerce with heretics both in correspondence with learned Frenchmen and in conversation with distinguished foreigners at Venice, was made a ground of accusation, and Clement VIII. declared that this alone sufficed to exclude him from any dignity in the Church.

It does not appear that Sarpi troubled his head about these things. Had he cared for power, there was no distinction to which he might not have aspired by stooping to common arts and by compromising his liberty of conscience. But he was indifferent to rank and wealth. Public business he discharged upon occasion from a sense of duty to his Order. For the rest, so long as he was left to pursue his studies in tranquil-

lity, Sarpi had happiness enough; and his modesty was so great that he did not even seek to publish the results of his discoveries in science. For this reason they have now been lost to the world; only the memory of them surviving in the notes of Foscarini and Grisellini, who inspected his MSS. before they were accidentally destroyed by fire in 1769.

Though renowned through Europe as the *orbis terrae ocellus*, the man sought out by every visitor to Venice as the rarest citizen of the Republic, Sarpi might have quitted this earthly scene with only the faint fame of a thinker whose eminent gifts blossomed in obscurity, had it not been for a public opportunity which forced him to forsake his studies and his cell for a place at the Council-board and for the functions of a polemical writer. That robust manliness of mind, which makes an Englishman hail English virtues in Sarpi, led him to affirm that 'every man of excellence is bound to pay attention to politics.'[1] Yet politics were not his special sphere. Up to the age of fifty-four he ripened in the assiduous studies of which I have made mention, in the discharge of his official duties as a friar, and his religious duties as a priest. He had distinguished himself amid the practical affairs of life by judicial acuteness, unswerving justice, infallible perspicacity, and inexhaustible stores of erudition brought to bear with facility on every detail of any matter in dispute. But nature and inclination seemed to mark him out through early manhood for experimental and speculative science rather than for action. Now a demand was made on his deep fount of energy, which evolved the latent forces of a character unique in many-sided strength. He had dedicated himself to religion and to the pursuit of knowledge. But he was a Venetian of the Venetians, the very soul of Venice. After God, his Prince and the Republic claimed obedience; and when S. Mark called, Sarpi abandoned science for the service of his country.

[1] *Lettere*, vol. ii. p. 80.

'Singularly composed of active and contemplative energies was the life of our Father; yielding to God that which he was able, to his Prince that which duty dictated, and to the domain of Venice more than any law but that of love demanded.'[1]

Paul V. assumed the tiara with the fixed resolve of making good the Papal claims to supremacy. Between Venice and the Holy See numerous disputed points of jurisdiction, relating to the semi-ecclesiastical fief of Ceneda, the investiture of the Patriarch, the navigation of the Po, and the right of the Republic to exercise judgment in criminal cases affecting priests, offered this Pope opportunities of interference. The Venetians maintained their customary prerogatives; and in April 1606 Paul laid them under interdict and excommunication. The Republic denied the legitimacy of this proceeding. The Doge, Leonardo Donato, issued a proclamation to the clergy of all degrees within the domain, appealing to their loyalty and enjoining on them the discharge of their sacerdotal duties in spite of the Papal interdict. Only Jesuits at first disobeyed the ducal mandate. When they refused to say Mass in the excommunicated city, they were formally expelled as contumacious subjects; and the fathers took ship amid the maledictions of the populace: '*Andate in malora.*' Their example was subsequently followed by the reformed Capuchins and the Theatines. Otherwise the Venetian clergy, like the people, remained firm in their allegiance to the State. 'We are Venetians first, Christians afterwards,' was a proverb dating from this incident. Venice, conscious of the justice of her cause, prepared to resist the Pope's arrogant demands if need were with arms, and to exercise religious rites within her towns in spite of Camillo Borghese's excommunication. The Senate, some time before these events happened, had perceived the advantage which would accrue to the Republic from the service of a practised canonist and jurisprudent in

[1] Sarpi's *Life* by Fra Fulgenzio, p. 64.

ecclesiastical affairs. Sarpi attracted their attention at an early stage of the dispute by a memorial which he drew up and presented to the Doge upon the best means of repelling Papal aggression. After perusing his report, in the month of January 1606, they appointed him Theologian and Canonist to the Republic, with a yearly salary of 200 ducats. This post he occupied until his death, having at a later period been raised to the still more important office of Counsellor of State, which eventually he filled alone without a single coadjutor.

From the month of January 1606, for the remaining seventeen years of his life, Sarpi was intellectually the most prominent personage of Venice, the man who for the world at large represented her policy of moderate but firm resistance to ecclesiastical tyranny. Greatness had been thrust upon the modest and retiring student; and Father Paul's name became the watchword of political independence throughout Europe.

The Jesuits acting in concert with Spain, as well-informed historians held certain, first inspired Camillo Borghese with his ill-considered attempt upon the liberties of Venice.[1] It was now the Jesuits, after their expulsion from the Republic, who opened the batteries of literary warfare against the Venetian government. They wrote and published manifestoes through the Bergamasque territory, which province acknowledged the episcopal jurisdiction of Milan, though it belonged to the Venetian domain. In these writings it was argued that, so long as the Papal interdict remained in force, all sacraments would be invalid, marriages null, and offspring illegitimate. The population, trained already in doctrines of Papal supremacy, were warned that should they remain loyal to a contumacious State, their own souls would perish through the lack of sacerdotal ministrations, and their posterity would roam the world as bastards and accursed. To traverse this

[1] Fra Fulgenzio's *Vita di F. Paolo*, p. 42. Venetian Despatches in Mutinelli's *Storia Arcana*, vol. iii. p. 67.

argument of sacerdotal tyranny, exorbitant in any age of the Latin Church, but preposterous after the illumination of the sixteenth century in Europe, was a citizen's plain duty. Sarpi therefore supplied an elegant Italian stylist, Giambattista Leoni, with material for setting forth a statement of the controversy between Venice and Rome. It would have been well if he had taken up the pen with his own hand. But at this early period of his career as publicist, he seems to have been diffident about his literary powers. The result was that Leoni's main defence of the Republic fell flat; and the war was waged for a while upon side issues. Sarpi drew a treatise by Gerson, the learned French champion of Catholic independence, forth from the dust of libraries, translated it into Italian, and gave it to the press accompanied by an introductory letter which he signed.[1] Cardinal Bellarmino responded from Rome with an attack on Sarpi's orthodoxy and Gerson's authority. Sarpi replied in an Apology for Gerson. Then, finding that Leoni's narrative had missed its mark, he poured forth pamphlet upon pamphlet, penning his own 'Considerations on the Censures,' inspiring Fra Fulgenzio Micanzi with a work styled 'Confirmations,' and finally reducing the whole matter of the controversy into a book entitled a 'Treatise on the Interdict,' which he signed together with six brother theologians of the Venetian party. It is not needful in this place to institute a minute investigation into the merits of this pamphlet warfare. In its details, whether we regard the haughty claims of delegated omnipotence advanced by Rome, or the carefully studied historical and canonistic arguments built up by Sarpi, the quarrel has lost actuality. Common sense and freedom have so far conquered in Europe that Sarpi's opinions, then denounced as heresies,

[1] The treatise which Sarpi translated was Gerson's *Considerations upon Papal Excommunications*. Gerson's part in the Council of Constance will be remembered. See Creighton's *History of the Papacy*, vol. i. p. 211.

sound now like truisms; and his candid boast that he was the first to break the neck of Papal encroachments upon secular prerogative, may pass for insignificant in an age which has little to fear from ecclesiastical violence.

Yet we must not forget that, during the first years of the seventeenth century, the Venetian conflict with Papal absolutism, considered merely as a test-case in international jurisprudence, was one of vitally important interest. When we reflect how the Catholic Alliance was then engaged in rolling back the tide of Reformation, how the forces of Rome had been rallied by the Tridentine Council, and how the organism of the Jesuits had been created to promulgate new dogmas of Papal almightiness in Church and State, this, resistance of Venice, stoutly Catholic in creed, valiant in her defence of Christendom against the Moslem, supported by her faithful churchman and accomplished canonist, was no inconsiderable factor in the European strife for light and liberty. The occasion was one of crucial gravity. Reconstituted Rome had not as yet been brought into abrupt collision with any commonwealth which abode in her communion. Had Venice yielded in that issue, the Papacy might have augured for itself a general victory. That Venice finally submitted to Roman influence, while preserving the semblance of independence, detracts, indeed, from the importance of this Interdict affair considered as an episode in the struggle for spiritual freedom. Moreover, we know now that the presumptuous pretensions of the Papacy at large were destined, before many years had passed, to be pared down, diminished, and obliterated by the mere advance of intellectual enlightenment. Yet none of these considerations diminish Sarpi's claim to rank as hero in the forefront of a battle which in his time was being waged with still uncertain prospects.[1] In their comparatively narrow

[1] Sarpi's correspondence abundantly proves how very grave was the peril of Papal Absolutism in his days. The tide had not begun to turn

spheres, Venice and Sarpi, not less than Holland, England, Sweden, and the Protestants of Germany, on their wider platform at a later date, were fighting for a principle upon which the liberty of States depended. And they were the first to fight for it upon the ground most perilous to the common adversary. In all his writings Sarpi sought to prove that men might remain sound Catholics and yet resist Roman aggression; that the Roman Court and its modern champions had introduced new doctrine, deviating from the pristine polity of Christendom; that the post-Tridentine theory of Papal Absolutism was a deformation of that order which Christ founded, which the Apostles edified, and which the Councils of a purer age had built into the living temple of God's Church on earth.

A passage from Sarpi's correspondence may be cited, as sounding the keynote to all his writings in this famous controversy. 'I imagine,' he writes to Jacques Gillot in 1609, 'that the State and the Church are two realms, composed, however, of the same human beings. The one is wholly heavenly, the other earthly. Each has its own sovereignty, defended by its own arms and fortifications. Nothing is held by them in common, and there should be no occasion for the one to declare war upon the other. Christ said that he and his disciples were not of this world. S. Paul affirms that our city is in the heavens. I take the word Church to signify an assembly of the faithful, not of priests only; for when we regard it as confined to those, it ceases to be Christ's kingdom, and becomes a portion of the commonwealth in this world, subject to the highest authority of State, as also are the

with force against the Jesuit doctrines of Papal Supremacy. See Ranke, vol. ii. pp. 4–12, on these doctrines and the counter-theories to which they gave rise. We must remember that the Papal power was now at the height of its ascension; and Sarpi can be excused for not having reckoned on the inevitable decline it suffered during the next century.

laity.'[1] This emphatic distinction between Church and State, both fulfilling the needs of humanity, but in diverse relations, lay at the root of Sarpi's doctrine. He regarded the claim of the Church to interfere in State management, not only as an infringement of the prince's prerogative, but also as patent rebellion against the law of God which had committed the temporal government of nations in sacred trust to secular rulers. As the State has no call to meddle in the creation and promulgation of dogmas, or to impose its ordinances on the religious conscience of its subjects, so the Church has no right to tamper with affairs of government, to accumulate wealth and arrogate secular power, or to withdraw its ministers from the jurisdiction of the prince in matters which concern the operation of criminal and civil legislature. The ultramontanism of the Jesuits appeared to him destructive of social order; but, more than this, he considered it as impious, as a deflection from the form of Christian economy, as a mischievous seduction of the Church into a slough of self-annihilating cupidity and concupiscence.

Sarpi's views seemed audacious in his own age. But they have become the commonplaces of posterity. We can therefore hardly do justice to the originality and audacity which they displayed at an epoch when only Protestants at war with Rome advanced the like in deadly hatred—when the Catholic pulpits of Europe were ringing with newly promulgated doctrines of Papal supremacy over princes and peoples, of national rights to depose or assassinate excommunicated sovereigns, and of blind unreasoning obedience to Rome as the sole sure method of salvation. Upon the path of that Papal triumph toward the Capitol of world-dominion, Sarpi, the puny friar from his cell at Venice, rose like a spectre announcing certain doom with the irrefragable arguments of reason. The minatory words he uttered were all

[1] *Lettere*, vol. i. p. 312.

the more significant because neither he nor the State he represented sought to break with Catholic traditions. His voice was terrible and mighty, inasmuch as he denounced Rome by an indictment which proclaimed her to be the perturbing power in Christendom, the troubler of Israel, the whore who poured her cup of fornications forth to sup with princes.

After sixteen months, the quarrel of the interdict was compromised. Venice, in duel with Islam, could ill afford to break with Rome, even if her national traditions of eight centuries, intertwined with rites of Latin piety, had not forbidden open rupture. The Papal Court, cowed into resentful silence by antagonism which threatened intellectual revolt through Europe, waived a portion of its claims. Three French converts from Huguenot opinions to Catholicism, Henri IV., the Cardinal du Perron, and M. de Canaye, adjusted matters. The interdict was dismissed from Venice rather than removed—in haughty silence, without the clashing of bells from S. Pietro di Castello and S. Marco, without manifestation of joy in the city which regarded Papal interdicts as illegitimate, without the parade of public absolution by the Pope. Thus the Republic maintained its dignity of self-respect. But Camillo Borghese, while proclaiming a general amnesty, reserved *in petto* implacable animosity against the theologians of the Venetian party. Two of these, Marsilio and Rubetti, died suddenly under suspicion of poison.[1] A third, Fulgenzio Manfredi, was lured to Rome, treated with fair show of favour, and finally hung in the Campo di Fiora by order of the Holy Office.[2] A fourth, Capello, abjured his so-called heresies, and was assigned a pittance for the last days of his failing life in Rome.[3] It remained, if possible,

[1] Sarpi's *Letters*, vol. ii. pp. 179, 284.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 100–102.
[3] Bianchi Giovini, *Vita di Fra P. Sarpi*, vol. ii. p. 49.

to lay hands on Fra Paolo and his devoted secretary, Fra Fulgenzio Micanzi, of the Servites.

Neither threats nor promises availed to make these friends quit Venice. During the interdict and afterwards, Fulgenzio Micanzi preached the gospel there. He told the people that in the New Testament he had found truth ; but he bade them take notice that for the laity this book was even a dead letter through the will of Rome.[1] Paul V. complained in words like these : Fra Fulgenzio's doctrine contains, indeed, no patent heresy, but it rests so clearly on the Bible as to prejudice the Catholic faith.[2] Sarpi informed his French correspondents that Christ and the truth had been openly preached in Venice by this man.[3] Fulgenzio survived the troubles of those times, steadily devoted to his master, of whom he has bequeathed to posterity a faithful portrait in that biography which combines the dove-like simplicity of the fourteenth century with something of Roger North's sagacity and humour.[4] Of Fulgenzio we take no further notice here, having paid him our debt of gratitude for genial service rendered in the sympathetic delineation of so eminent a character as Sarpi's. A side-regret may be expressed that some such simple and affectionate record of Bruno as a man still fails us, and alas ! must ever fail. Fulgenzio, by his love, makes us love Sarpi, who otherwise might coldly win our admiration. But for Bruno, that scapegoat of the spirit in the world's wilderness, there is none to speak words of worship and affection.

The first definite warning that his life was in danger came to Sarpi from Caspar Schoppe, the publicist. Scioppius (so

[1] A. G. Campbell's *Life of Sarpi*, p. 174.
[2] Sarpi's *Letters*, vol. i. pp. 231, 239.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 220, 222, 225.
[4] *Vita del Padre F. Paolo Sarpi*, Helmstedt, per Jacopo Mulleri, MDCCXXXXX

his contemporaries called him) was a man of doubtful character and unsteady principles, who, according as his interests varied, used a fluent pen and limpid Latin style for or against the Jesuit faction. History would hardly condescend to notice him but for the singular luck he had of coming at critical moments into contact with the three chief Italian thinkers of his time. We know already that a letter of this man is the one contemporary testimony of an eye-witness to Bruno's condemnation which we possess. He also deserves mention for having visited Campanella in prison and helped to procure his liberation. Now in the year 1607, while passing through Venice, Schoppe sought a private interview with Sarpi, pointed out the odium which Fra Paolo had gained in Rome by his writings, and concluded by asserting that the Pope meant to have him alive or to compass his assassination. If Sarpi wished to make his peace with Paul V., Schoppe was ready to conduct the reconciliation upon honourable terms, having already several affairs of like import in his charge. To this proposal Sarpi replied that the cause he had defended was a just one, that he had done nothing to offend his Holiness, and that all plots against his liberty or life he left within the hands of God. To these words he significantly added that, even in the Pope's grasp, a man was always 'master over his own life'—a sentence which seems to indicate suicide as the last resort of self-defence. In September of the same year the Venetian ambassador at Rome received private information regarding some mysterious design against a person or persons unknown, at Venice, in which the Papal Court were implicated, and which was speedily to take effect.[1] On October 5 Sarpi was returning about five o'clock in the afternoon to his convent at S. Fosca, when he was attacked upon a bridge by five

[1] Despatch to Fr. Contarini under date September 25, 1607, quoted in Campbell's *Life of Sarpi*, p. 145.

ruffians. It so happened that on this occasion he had no attendant but his servant Fra Marino; Fra Fulgenzio and a man of courage, who usually accompanied him, having taken another route home. The assassins were armed with harquebusses, pistols, and poniards. One of them went straight at Sarpi, while the others stood on guard and held down Fra Marino. Fifteen blows in all were aimed at Sarpi, three of which struck him in the neck and face. The stiletto remained firmly embedded in his cheekbone between the right ear and nose. He fell to the ground senseless; and a cry being raised by some women who had witnessed the outrage from a window, the assassins made off, leaving their victim for dead. It was noticed that they took refuge in the palace of the Papal Nuncio, whence they escaped that same evening to the Lido *en route* for the States of the Church. An old Venetian nobleman of the highest birth, Alessandro Malipiero, who bore a singular affection for the champion of his country's liberty, was walking a short way in front of Sarpi beyond the bridge upon which the assault was perpetrated. He rushed to his friend's aid, dragged out the dagger from his face, and bore him to the convent. There Sarpi lay for many weeks in danger, suffering as much, it seems, from his physicians as from the wounds. Not satisfied with the attendance of his own surgeon, Alvise Ragoza, the Venetians insisted on sending all the eminent doctors of the city and of Padua to his bedside. The illustrious Acquapendente formed one of this miscellaneous *cortège*; and when the cure was completed, he received a rich gold chain and knighthood for his service. Every medical man suggested some fresh application. Some of them, suspecting poison, treated the wounds with theriac and antidotes. Others cut into the flesh and probed. Meanwhile the loss of blood had so exhausted Sarpi's meagre frame that for more than twenty days he had no strength to move or lift his hands. Not a word of im-

patience escaped his lips; and when Acquapendente began to medicate the worst wound in his face, he moved the dozen doctors to laughter by wittily observing, 'And yet the world maintains that it was given *Stilo Romanae Curiae.*'[1] His old friend Malipiero would fain have kept the dagger as a relic. But Sarpi suspended it at the foot of a crucifix in the church of the Servi, with this appropriate inscription, *Dei Filio Liberatori.* When he had recovered from his long suffering, the Republic assigned their Counsellor an increase of pension in order that he might maintain a body of armed guards, and voted him a house in S. Marco for the greater security of his person. But Sarpi begged to be allowed to remain among the friars, with whom he had spent his life, and where his vocation bound him. In the future he took a few obvious precautions, passing in a gondola to the Rialto and thence on foot through the crowded Merceria to the Ducal Palace, and furthermore securing the good offices of his attendants in the convent by liberal gifts of money. Otherwise, he refused to alter the customary tenor of his way.

The State of Venice resented this attack upon their servant as though it had been directed against the majesty of the Republic. A proclamation was immediately issued, offering enormous rewards for the capture or murder of the criminals, especially so worded as to insinuate the belief that men of high position in Rome were implicated. The names of the chief conspirators were as follows: Ridolfo Poma, a broken Venetian merchant; Alessandro Parrasio of Ancona, outlawed for the murder of his uncle; a priest, Michele Viti

[1] Fulgenzio's *Life*, p. 61. A. G. Campbell asserts that this celebrated *mot* of Sarpi's is not to be found in Fulgenzio's MS. It occurs, however, quite naturally in the published work. The first edition of the Life appeared in 1646, eight years before Fulgenzio's death. The discrepancies between it and the MS. may therefore have been intended by the author.

of Bergamo; and two soldiers of adventure, Giovanni di Fiorenza and Pasquale di Bitonto. Having escaped to the Lido, they took ship for Ravenna and arrived in due course at Ancona, where they drew 1000 crowns from the Papal Camera, and proceeded to make triumphal progress through Romagna. Their joy was dashed by hearing that Fra Paolo had not been killed. The Venetian *bando* filled them with fears and mutual suspicions, each man's hand being now set against his comrade, and every ruffian on the road having an interest in their capture. Yet after some time they continued their journey to Rome, and sought sanctuary in the palace of Cardinal Colonna. Here their reception was not what they had anticipated. Having failed in the main object and brought scandal on the Church, they were maintained for some months in obscurity, and then coldly bidden to depart with scanty recompense. All this while their lives remained exposed to the Venetian ban. Under these circumstances it is not strange that the men were half-maddened. Poma raged like a wild beast, worshipping the devil in his private chamber, planning schemes of piracy and fresh attacks on Sarpi, even contemplating a last conspiracy against the person of the Pope. He was seized in Rome by the *sbirri* of the government, and one of his sons perished in the scuffle. Another returned to Venice, and ended his days there as a vagrant lunatic. Poma himself died mad in the prison of Cività Vecchia. Viti also died mad in the same prison. Parrasio died in prison at Rome. One of the soldiers was beheaded at Perugia, and the other fell a victim to cut-throats on the high road. Such was the end of the five conspirators against Fra Paolo Sarpi's life.[1] A priest, Franceschi, who had aided and abetted their plot, disappeared

[1] A full account of them is given by Bianchi Giovini in his *Biografia*, chap. xvii.

soon after the explosion; and we may rest tolerably assured that his was no natural removal to another world.

It is just to add that the instigation of this murderous plot was never brought home by direct testimony to any members of the Papal Court. But the recourse which the assassins first had to the asylum of the Nuncio in Venice, their triumphal progress through cities of the Church, the moneys they drew on several occasions, the interest taken in them by Cardinal Borghese when they finally reached Rome, and their deaths in Papal dungeons, are circumstances of overwhelming cumulative evidence against the Curia. Sarpi's life was frequently attempted in the following years. On one occasion, Cardinal Bellarmino, more mindful of private friendship than of public feud, sent him warning that he must live prepared for fresh attacks from Rome. Indeed, it may be said that he now passed his days in continual expectation of poison or the dagger. This appears plainly in Fulgenzio's biography and in the pages of his private correspondence. The most considerable of these later conspiracies, of which Fra Fulgenzio gives a full account, implicated Cardinal Borghese and the General of the Servite Order.[1] The history seems in brief to be as follows. One Fra Bernardo of Perugia, who had served the Cardinal during their student days, took up his residence in Rome so soon as Scipione Borghese became a profitable patron. In the course of the year 1609, this Fra Bernardo despatched a fellow-citizen of his, named Fra Giovanni Francesco, to Padua, whence he frequently came across to Venice and tampered with Sarpi's secretary, Fra Antonio of Viterbo. These three friars were all of them Servites; and it appears that the General looked with approval on their undertaking. The upshot of the traffic was that Fra Antonio, having ready access to Sarpi's apartments and person, agreed either to murder him with a razor

[1] *Vita di F. Paolo*, pp. 67–70.

or to put poison in his food, or, what was finally determined on, to introduce a couple of assassins into his bedchamber at night. An accident revealed the plot, and placed a voluminous cyphered correspondence in the hands of the Venetian Inquisitor of State. Fra Fulgenzio significantly adds that of all the persons incriminated by these letters, none, with the exception of the General of the Servites, was under the rank of Cardinal. The wording of his sentence is intentionally obscure, but one expression seems even to point at the Pope.[1]

At the close of this affair, so disgraceful to the Church and to his Order, Fra Paolo besought the Signory of Venice on his bended knees, as a return for services rendered by him to the State, that no public punishment should be inflicted on the culprits. He could not bear, he said, to be the cause of bringing a blot of infamy upon his religion, or of ruining the career of any man. Fra Giovanni Francesco afterwards redeemed his life by offering weighty evidence against his powerful accomplices. But what he revealed is buried in the oblivion with which the Council of Ten in Venice chose to cover judicial acts of State importance.

It is worth considering that in all the attempts upon Sarpi's life, priests, friars and prelates of high place were the prime agents.[2] Poor devils like Poma and Parrasio lay ready to their hands as sanguinary instruments, which, after work performed, could be broken if occasion served. What, then, was the religious reformation of which the Roman Court made ostentatious display when it secured its unexpected triumph in the Council of Trent? We must reply that in

[1] *Vita di F. Paolo*, p. 68: 'Le cose che vennero a pubblica notizia e certe sono: che molte persone nominate in quella cifra, di *Padre* fratelli, e cugini, per le contracifre constò, dal Generale de' Servi in fuori, niuna esser di dignità inferiore alla Cardinalizia.'

[2] Sarpi says that no crime happened in Venice without a friar or priest being mixed in it (*Lettere*, vol. i. p. 351).

essential points of moral conduct this reformation amounted to almost nothing, and in some points to considerably less than nothing. The Church of God, as Sarpi held, suffered deformation rather than reformation. That is to say, this Church, instead of being brought back to primitive simplicity and purged of temporal abuses, now lay at the mercy of ambitious hypocrites who, with the Supreme Pontiff's sanction, pursued their ends by treachery and violence. Its hostility to heretics and its new-fangled doctrine of Papal almightiness encouraged the spread of a pernicious casuistry which favoured assassination. Kings at strife with the Catholic Alliance, honest Christians defending the prerogatives of their commonwealth, erudite historians and jurists who disapproved of substituting Popes in Rome for God in heaven, might be massacred or kidnapped by ruffians red with the blood of their nearest relatives and carrying the condemnation of their native States upon their forehead. According to the post-Tridentine morality of Rome, that morality which the Jesuits openly preached and published, which was disseminated in every prelate's antechamber, and whispered in every parish-priest's confessional, enormous sins could be atoned and eternal grace be gained by the merciless and traitorous murder of any notable man who savoured of heresy. If the Holy Office had instituted a prosecution against the victim and had condemned him in his absence, the path was plain. Sentence of excommunication and death publicly pronounced on such a man reduced him to the condition of a wild beast whose head was worth solid coin and plenary absolution to the cut-throat. A private minute recorded on the books of the Inquisitors had almost equal value; and Sarpi was under the impression that some such underhand proceeding against himself had loosed a score of knives. But short of these official or semi-judicial preliminaries, it was maintained upon the best casuistical authority that to take the life of any

suspected heretic, of anyone reputed heterodox in Roman circles, should be esteemed a work of merit creditable to the miscreant who perpetrated the deed, and certain, even should he die for it, to yield him in the other world the joys of Paradise. These joys the Jesuits described in language worthy of the Koran. Dabbled in Sarpi's or Duplessis Mornay's blood, quartered and tortured like Ravaillac, the desperado of so pious a crime would swim for ever in oceans of ecstatic pleasure. The priest, ambitious for his hierarchy, fanatical in his devotion to the Church, relying upon privilege if he should chance to be detected, had a plain interest in promoting and directing such conspiracies. Men of blood and bandits, up to the hilts in crimes of violence, rendered reckless by the indiscriminate cruelty of justice in those days, allured by the double hope of pay and spiritual benefit, rushed without a back-thought into like adventures. Ready to risk their lives in an unholy cause, such ruffians were doubly glad to do so when the bait of heaven's felicity was offered to their grosser understanding. These considerations explain, but are far indeed from exculpating, the complicity of clergy and cut-throats in every crime of violence attempted against foes of Papal Rome.

Sarpi's worst enemies could scarcely fix on him the crime of heresy. He was a staunch Catholic; so profoundly versed both in dogmatic theology and in ecclesiastical procedure, that to remain within the straitest limits of orthodoxy, while opposing the presumption of the Papal Court, gave him no trouble. Yet at the time in which he lived, the bare act of resistance to any will or whim of Rome, passed with those doctors who were forging new systems of Pontifical supremacy, for heretical. In this arbitrary and uncanonical sense of the phrase Sarpi was undoubtedly a heretic. He had deserved the hatred of the Curia, the Inquisition, the Jesuits, and their myrmidons. Steadily, with caution and a sober spirit, he had

employed his energies and vast accumulated stores of knowledge in piling up breakwaters against their pernicious innovations. In all his controversial writings during the interdict Sarpi used none but solid arguments, drawn from Scripture, canon-law, and the Councils of the early Church, in order to deduce one single principle: namely, that both secular and ecclesiastical organisms, the State and the Church, are divinely appointed, but with several jurisdictions and for diverse ends. He pressed this principle home with hammer-strokes of most convincing proof on common-sense and reason. He did so even superfluously to our modern intellect, which is fatigued by following so elaborate a chain of precedents up to a foregone conclusion. But he let no word fall, except by way of passing irony, which could bring contempt upon existing ecclesiastical potentates; and he maintained a dispassionate temper, while dealing with topics which at that epoch inflamed the fiercest party strife. His antagonists, not having sound learning, reason, and the Scripture on their side, were driven to employ the rhetoric of personal abuse and the stiletto. In the end the badness of their cause was proved by the recourse they had to conspiracies of pimps, friars, murderers, and fanatics, in order to stifle that voice of truth which told them of their aberration from the laws of God.

It was not merely by his polemical writings during the interdict that Sarpi won the fame of heretic in ultra-papal circles. In his office as Theologian to the Republic he had to report upon all matters touching the relations of State to Church; and the treatises which he prepared on such occasions assumed the proportions, in many instances, of important literary works. Among these the most considerable is entitled 'Delle Materie Beneficiarie.' Professing to be a discourse upon ecclesiastical benefices, it combines a brief but sufficient history of the temporal power of the Papacy, an inquiry into the arts whereby the Church's

property had been accumulated, and a critique of the various devices employed by the Roman Curia to divert that wealth from its original objects. In 'this golden volume,' to use Gibbon's words, 'the Papal system is deeply studied and freely described.' Speaking of its purport, Hallam observes: 'That object was neither more nor less than to represent the wealth and power of the Church as ill-gotten and excessive.' Next in importance is a 'Treatise on the Inquisition,' which gives a condensed sketch of the origin and development of the Holy Office, enlarging upon the special modifications of that institution as it existed in Venice. Here likewise Sarpi set himself to resist ecclesiastical encroachments upon the domain of secular jurisdiction. He pointed out how the right of inquiring into cases of heretical opinion had been gradually wrested from the hands of the bishop and the State, and committed to a specially elected body which held itself only responsible to Rome. He showed how this powerful tribunal was being used to the detriment of States, by extending its operation into the sphere of politics, extruding the secular magistracy from participation in its judgments, and arrogating to itself the cognisance of civil crimes. A third 'Discourse upon the Press' brought the same system of attack to bear upon the Index of prohibited books. Sarpi was here able to demonstrate that a power originally delegated to the bishops of proscribing works pernicious to morality and religion, was now employed for the suppression of sound learning and enlightenment by a Congregation sworn to support the Papacy. Passing from their proper sphere of theology and ethics, these ecclesiastics condemned as heretical all writings which denied the supremacy of Rome over nations and commonwealths, prevented the publication and sale of books which defended the rights of princes and republics, and flooded Europe with doctrines of regicide, Pontifical omnipotence, and hierarchical predominance in secular affairs.

These are the most important of Sarpi's minor works. But the same spirit of liberal resistance against Church aggression, supported by the same erudition and critical sagacity, is noticeable in a short tract explaining how the Right of Asylum had been abused to the prejudice of public justice; in a 'Discourse upon the Contributions of the Clergy,' distinguishing their real from their assumed immunities; and in a brief memorandum upon the Greek College in Rome, exposing the mischief wrought in commonwealths and families by the Jesuit system of education.

In all these writings Sarpi held firmly by his main principle, that the State, no less than the Church, exists *jure divino*. The Papal usurpation of secular prerogatives was in his eyes not merely a violation of the divinely appointed order of government, but also a deformation of the ecclesiastical ideal. Those, he argued, are the real heretics who deprave the antique organism of the Church by making the Pope absolute, who preach the deity of the Roman Pontiff as though he were a second God equal in almightiness to God in heaven. 'Nay,' he exclaims in a passage marked by more than usual heat, 'should one drag God from heaven they would not stir a finger, provided the Pope preserved his vice-divinity or rather super-divinity. Bellarmino clearly states that to restrict the Papal authority to spiritual affairs is the same as to annihilate it; showing that they value the spiritual at just zero.'[1] Sarpi saw that the ultra-papalists of his day, by subordinating the State, the family, and the individual to the worldly interests of Rome, by repressing knowledge and liberty of conscience, preaching immoral and anti-social doctrines, encouraging superstition and emasculating education, for the maintenance of those same worldly interests, were advancing steadily upon the path of self-destruction. The essence of Christianity was neglected in

[1] *Lettere*, vol. ii. p. 160.

this brutal struggle for supremacy; while truth, virtue and religion, those sacred safeguards of humanity, which the Church was instituted to preserve, ran no uncertain risk of perishing through the unnatural perversion of its aims.

The work which won for Sarpi a permanent place in the history of literature, and which in his lifetime did more than any other of his writings to expose the Papal system, is the history of the Tridentine Council. It was not published with his name or with his sanction. A manuscript copy lent by him to Marcantonio de Dominis, Archbishop of Spalatro, was taken by that waverer between Catholicism and Protestantism to England, and published in London under the pseudonym of Pietro Soave Polano—an anagram of Paolo Sarpi Veneto—in the year 1619. That Sarpi was the real author admits of no doubt. The book bears every stamp of genuineness. It is written in the lucid, nervous, straightforward style of the man, who always sought for mathematical precision rather than rhetorical elegance in his use of language. Sarpi had taken special pains to collect materials for a History of the Council; and in doing so he had enjoyed exceptional advantages. Early in his manhood he formed at Mantua a close friendship with Camillo Olivo, who had been secretary to the Papal Legate, Cardinal Gonzaga of Mantua, at Trent. During his residence in Rome between 1585 and 1587 he became intimately acquainted with Cardinal Castagna, president of the committee appointed for drawing up the decrees of the Council. In addition to the information afforded by these persons, officially connected with the transactions of the Council, Sarpi had at his command the Archives of Venice, including the despatches of ambassadors, and a vast store of published documents, not to mention numerous details which in the course of his long commerce with society he had obtained from the lips of credible witnesses. All these sources, grasped in their diversity by his powerful memory

and animated with his vivid intellect, are worked into an even plain dispassionate narration, which, in spite of the dryness of the subject, forms a truly fascinating whole. That Sarpi was strictly fair in his conception of the Council, can scarcely be maintained; for he wrote in a spirit of distinct antagonism to the ends which it achieved. Yet the more we examine the series of events described by him, the more are we convinced that in its main features the work is just. When Sir Roger Twysden pronounced it 'to be written with so great moderation, learning, and wisdom, as might deserve a place amongst the exactest pieces of ecclesiastic story any age had produced,' he did not overshoot the mark. Nor has the avowedly hostile investigation to which Cardinal Pallavicini submitted it, done more than to confirm its credit by showing that a deadly enemy, with all the arsenal of Roman documents at his command, could only detect inaccuracies in minor details and express rage at the controlling animus of the work.

It was Sarpi's object to demonstrate that the Council of Trent, instead of being a free and open Synod of Christians assembled to discuss points at issue between the Catholic and Protestant Churches, was in reality a closely packed conciliabulum, from which Protestants were excluded, and where Catholics were dominated by the Italian agents of the Roman Court. He made it clear, and in this he is confirmed by masses of collateral proofs, that the presiding spirit of the Council was human diplomacy rather than divine inspiration, and that Roman intrigue conducted its transactions to an issue favourable for Papal supremacy by carefully manipulating the interests of princes and the passions of individuals. 'I shall narrate the causes,' he remarks, in his exordium, 'and the negotiations of an ecclesiastical convocation, during the course of twenty-two years, for divers ends and with varied means; by whom promoted and solicited, by whom impeded and delayed; for another eighteen years, now

brought together, now dissolved; always held with various ends; and which received a form and accomplishment quite contrary to the design of those who set it going, as also to the fear of those who took all pains to interrupt it. A clear monition that man ought to yield his thoughts resignedly to God and not to trust in human prudence. Forasmuch as this Council, desired and put in motion by pious men for the reunion of the Church which had begun to break asunder, had so established schism and embittered factions that it has rendered those discords irreconcileable; handled by princes for the reform of the ecclesiastical system, has caused the greatest deformation that hath ever been since the name of Christian came into existence; by bishops with hope expected as that which would restore the episcopal authority, now in large part absorbed by the sole Roman Pontiff, hath been the reason of their losing the last vestige of it and of their reduction to still greater servitude. On the other hand, dreaded and evaded by the Court of Rome, as an efficient instrument for curbing that exorbitant power, which from small beginnings hath arrived by various advances to limitless excess, it has so established and confirmed it over the portion still left subject to it, as that it never was so vast nor so well-rooted.' In treating of what he pithily calls 'the Iliad of our age,' Sarpi promises to observe the truth, and protests that he is governed by no passion. This promise the historian kept faithfully. His animus is never allowed to transpire in any direct tirades; his irony emerges rather in reporting epigrams of others than in personal sarcasms or innuendoes; his own prepossessions and opinions are carefully veiled. After reading the whole voluminous history we feel that it would be as inaccurate to claim Sarpi for Protestantism as to maintain that he was a friend of ultra-papal Catholicism. What he really had at heart was the restoration of the Church of God to unity, to purer discipline and to sincere spirituality. This

reconstruction of Christendom upon a sound basis was, as he perceived, rendered impossible by the Tridentine decrees. Yet, though the dearest hope of his heart had been thus frustrated, he set nothing down in malice, nor vented his own disappointment in laments which might have seemed rebellious against the Divine will. Sarpi's personality shows itself most clearly in the luminous discourses with which from time to time he elucidates obscure matters of ecclesiastical history. Those on episcopal residence, pluralism, episcopal jurisdiction, the censure of books, and the malappropriation of endowments, are specially valuable.[1] If no other proof existed, these digressions would render Sarpi's authorship of the History unmistakable. They are identical in style and in intention with his acknowledged treatises, firmly but calmly expressing a sound scholar's disapproval of abuses which had grown up like morbid excrescences upon the Church. Taken in connexion with the interpolated summaries of public opinion regarding the Council's method of procedure and its successive decrees, these discourses betray a spirit of hostility to Rome which is nowhere openly expressed. Sarpi illustrated Aretino's cynical sentence: 'How can you speak evil of your neighbour? By speaking the truth, by speaking the truth!'—without rancour and without passion. Nothing, in fact, could have been more damaging to Rome than his precise analysis of her arts in the Council.

I have said that the History of the Tridentine Council, though it confirmed Sarpi's heretical reputation, would not justify us in believing him at heart a Protestant.[2] Very

[1] *Opere di Paolo Sarpi*, Helmstadt, 1761, vol. i. pp. 200, 233, 311; vol. ii. pp. 89, 187.

[2] This contradicts the opinion of Hallam and Macaulay, both of whom were convinced that Sarpi was a Protestant at heart. Macaulay wishes that he had thrown off the friar's frock. In a certain sense Sarpi can be classified with the larger minds among the Reformed

much depends on how we define the word Protestant. If Sarpi's known opinions regarding the worldliness of Rome, ecclesiastical abuses, and Papal supremacy, constitute a Protestant, then he certainly was one. But if antagonism to Catholic dogma, repudiation of the Catholic sacraments and abhorrence of monastic institutions are also necessary to the definition, then Sarpi was as certainly no Protestant. He seems to have anticipated the position of those Christians who now are known as Old Catholics. This appears from his vivid sympathy with the Gallican Church, and from his zealous defence of those prerogatives and privileges in which the Venetian Church resembled that of France. We must go to his collected letters in order to penetrate his real way of thinking on the subject of reform. The most important of these are addressed to Frenchmen—Ph. Duplessis Mornay, De l'Isle Groslot, Leschassier, a certain Roux, Gillot, and Casaubon. If we could be quite sure that the text of these familiar letters had not been tampered with before publication, their testimony would be doubly valuable. As it is, no one at all acquainted with Sarpi's style will doubt that in the main they are trustworthy. Here and there it may be that a phrase has been inserted or modified to give a stronger Protestant colouring. The frequent allusion to the Court of Rome under the title of *La Meretrice*, especially in letters to

Churches of his age. But to call him a Protestant who concealed his real faith, argues coarseness of perception, incapacity for comprehending any attitude above and beyond belligerent Catholicism and Protestantism, or of sympathising with the deeply religious feelings of one who, after calculating all chances and surveying all dogmatic differences, thought that he could serve God as well and his country better in that communion which was his by birthright. To an illuminated intellect there was not in the seventeenth century much reason to prefer one of the Reformed Churches to Catholicism, except for the sake of political freedom. It being impossible to change the State-religion in Venice, Sarpi had no inducement to leave his country and to pass his life in exile among prejudiced sectarians.

Duplessis Mornay, looks suspicious.[1] Yet Dante, Petrarch and Savonarola used similar metaphors, when describing the secular ambition of the Papacy. Having pointed out a weakness in this important series of documents, I will translate some obviously genuine passages which illustrate Sarpi's attitude toward reform.

Writing to Leschassier upon the literary warfare of James I., he says it is a pity that the king did not abstain from theology and confine himself to the defence of his princely prerogatives against the claims of Rome. He has exposed himself to the imputation of wishing to upset the foundations of the faith. 'With regard to our own affairs [*i.e.* in Venice], we do not seek to mix up heaven and earth, things human and things divine. Our desire is to leave the sacraments and all that pertains to religion as they are, believing that we can uphold the secular government in those rights which Scripture and the teaching of the Fathers confirm.'[2] In another place he says: 'I have well considered the reasons which drew Germany and England into changing the observances of religion; but upon us neither these nor others of greater weight will exercise any influence. It is better to suffer certain rules and customs that are not in all points commendable, than to acquire a taste for revolution and to yield to the temptation of confounding all things in chaos.'[3] His own grievance against the Popes, he adds, is that they are innovating and destroying the primitive constitution of the Church. With regard to the possibility of uniting Christendom, he writes that many of the differences between Catholics and Protestants seem to him verbal; many, such as could be tolerated in one communion; and many capable of adjustment. But a good occasion must be waited for.[4] Nothing can be done in Italy without a general

[1] *Lettere*, vol. ii. pp. 3, 18, 96, 109, and elsewhere.
[2] *Ib.* vol. ii. p. 6. [3] *Ib.* vol. i. p. 237. [4] *Ib.* p. 268.

war, that shall shake the powers of Spain and Rome.[1] Both Spain and Rome are so well aware of their peril that they use every means to keep Italy in peace.[2] If the Protestants of Europe are bent on victory, they must imitate the policy of Scipio and attack the Jesuits and Rome in their head-quarters.[3] 'There is no enterprise of greater moment than to destroy the credit of the Jesuits. When they are conquered, Rome is taken; and without Rome, religion reforms itself spontaneously.'[4] 'Changes in State are inextricably involved in changes of religion;'[5] and Italy will never be free so long as the Diacatholicon lasts. Meanwhile, 'were it not for State policy there would be found hundreds ready to leap from this ditch of Rome to the summit of Reform.'[6] The hope of some improvement at Venice depends mainly upon the presence there of embassies from Protestant powers —England, Holland and the Grisons.[7] These give an opportunity to free religious discussion, and to the dissemination of Gospel truth. Sarpi is strong in his praise of Fra Fulgenzio for fearlessly preaching Christ and the truth, and repeats the Pope's complaint that the Bible is injurious to the Catholic faith.[8] He led William Bedell, chaplain to Sir H. Wotton and afterwards Bishop of Kilmore, to believe that Fra Fulgenzio and himself were ripe for Reform. 'These two I know,' writes Bedell to Prince Henry, 'as having practised with them, to desire nothing so much as the Reformation of the Church, and, in a word, for the substance of religion they are wholly ours.'[9] During the interdict Diodati came from Geneva to Venice, and Sarpi informed him that some 12,000 persons in the city wished for rupture with

[1] *Lettere*, vol. ii. pp. 29, 48, 59, 60, 125.
[2] *Ib.* pp. 120, 124.
[3] *Ib.* p. 226.
[4] *Ib.* p. 217.
[5] *Ib.* p. 427.
[6] *Ib.* vol. ii. p. 283.
[7] *Ib.* pp. 110, 311.
[8] *Ib.* vol. i. pp. 220, 222, 225, 231, 239.
[9] Campbell's *Life*, p. 132.

Rome; but the government and the aristocracy being against it, nothing could be done.[1]

Enough has now been quoted to throw some light upon Sarpi's attitude toward Protestantism. That he most earnestly desired the overthrow of ultra-papal Catholicism, is apparent. So also are his sympathies with those reformed nations which enjoyed liberty of conscience and independence of ecclesiastical control. Yet his first duty was to Venice; and since the State remained Catholic, he personally had no intention of quitting the communion into which he had been born and in which he was an ordained priest. All Churches, he wrote in one memorable letter to Casaubon, have their imperfections. The Church of Corinth, in the days of the Apostles, was corrupt.[2] 'The fabric of the Church of God,' being on earth, cannot expect immunity from earthly frailties.[3] Such imperfections and such frailties as the Catholic Church shared with all things of this world, Sarpi was willing to tolerate. The deformation of that Church by Rome and Jesuitry he manfully withstood; but he saw no valid reason why he should abandon her for Protestantism. In his own conscience he remained free to serve God in spirit and in truth. The mind of the man in fact was too far-seeing and too philosophical to exchange old lamps for new without a better prospect of attaining to absolute truth than the dissenters from Catholicism afforded. His interest in Protestant, as separate from Catholic Reform, was rather civil and political than religious or theological. Could those soaring wings of Rome be broken, then and not till then, might the Italians enjoy freedom of conscience, liberty of discussion and research, purer piety, and a healthier activity as citizens.

Side light may be thrown upon Sarpi's judgment of the

[1] Campbell's *Life*, pp. 133, 135.

[2] *Lettere*, vol. ii. p. 86.

[3] *Ib.* vol. i. p. 283.

European situation by considering in detail what he said about the Jesuits. This Company, as we have seen, lent its support to Papal absolutism ; and during the later years of Sarpi's life it seemed destined to carry the world before it, by control of education, by devotion to Rome, by adroit manipulation of the religious consciousness for anti-social ends and ecclesiastical aggrandisement.

The sure sign of being in the right, said Sarpi, is when one finds himself in contradiction to the Jesuits. They are most subtle masters in ill-doing, men who, if their needs demand, are ready to commit crimes worse than those of which they now are guilty. All falsehood and all blasphemy proceed from them. They have set the last hand at establishing universal corruption. They are a public plague, the plague of the world, chameleons who take their colour from the soil they squat on, flatterers of princes, perverters of youth. They not only excuse but laud lying; their dissimulation is bare and unqualified mendacity; their malice is inestimable. They have the art so to blend their interests and that of Rome, seeking for themselves and the Papacy the empire of the world, that the Curia must needs support them, while it cowers before their inscrutable authority. They are the ruin of good literature and wholesome doctrine by their pitiful pretence of learning and their machinery of false teaching. On ignorance rests their power, and truth is mortal to them. Every vice of which humanity is capable, every frailty to which it is subject, finds from them support and consolation. If S. Peter had been directed by a Jesuit confessor he might have arrived at denying Christ without sin. They use the confessional as an instrument of political and domestic influence, reciprocating its confidences one with the other in their own debates, but menacing their penitents with penalties if a word of their counsel be bruited to the world. Expelled from Venice, they work more mischief there by their intrigues

than they did when they were tolerated.[1] They scheme to get a hold on Constantinople and Palestine, in order to establish seminaries of fanatics and assassins. They are responsible for the murder of Henri IV., for if they did not instigate Ravaillac, their doctrine of regicide inspired him. They can creep into any kingdom, any institution, any household, because they readily accept any terms and subscribe to any conditions in the certainty that by the adroit use of flattery, humbug, falsehood, and corruption, they will soon become masters of the situation. In France they are the real Morbus Gallicus. In Italy they are the soul of the Diacatholicon.

The torrent of Sarpi's indignation against the Jesuits, as perverters of sound doctrine in the Church, disturbers of kingdoms, sappers of morality and disseminators of vile customs through society, runs so violently forward that we are fain to check it, while acknowledging its justice. One passage only, from the many passages bearing on this topic in his correspondence, demands special citation, since it deals directly with the whole material of the present work. Writing to his friend Leschassier, he speaks as follows: 'Nothing can be of more mischief to you in France than the dishonesty of bad confessors and their determination to aggrandise Rome by any means, together with the mistaken zeal of the good sort. We have arrived at a point where cure of the disease must even be despaired of. Fifty years ago things went well in Italy. There was no public system of education for training young men to the profit of the clergy. They were brought up by their parents in private, more for the advantage of their families than for that of the hierarchy. In religious houses, where studies flourished, attention was paid to scholastic

[1] It is worthy of notice, as a stern Venetian joke, that when the Jesuits eventually returned to the Rialto, they were bade walk in processions upon ceremonial occasions between the Fraternities of S. Marco and S. Teodoro—saints amid whose columns on the Molo criminals were executed.

logic. The jurisdiction and the authority of the Pope were hardly touched on ; and while theology was pursued at leisure, the majority passed their years in contemplation of the Deity and angels. Recently, through the decrees of the Tridentine Council, schools have been opened in every State, which are called Seminaries, where education is concentrated on the sole end of augmenting ecclesiastical supremacy. Furthermore, the prelates of each district, partly with a view of saving their own pockets, and partly that they may display a fashionable show of zeal, have committed the charge of those institutions to Jesuits. This has caused a most important alteration in the aspect of affairs.'[1] It would be difficult to state the changes effected by the Tridentine Council and the commission of education to the Jesuits more precisely and more fairly than in this paragraph. How deeply Sarpi had penetrated the Jesuitical arts in education, can be further demonstrated from another passage in his minor works.[2] In a memoir prepared for the Venetian Signory, he says that the Jesuits are vulgarly supposed to be unrivalled as trainers of youth. But a patent equivocation lurks under this phrase 'unrivalled.' Education must be considered with regard to the utility of the State. 'Now the education of the Jesuits consists in stripping the pupil of every obligation to his father, to his country, and to his natural prince ; in diverting all his love and fear toward a spiritual superior, on whose nod, beck and word he is dependent. This system of training is useful for the supremacy of ecclesiastics and for such secular governments as they are ready to submit to ; and none can deny that the Jesuits are without equals in their employment of it. Yet in so far as it is advantageous in such cases, so also is it prejudicial to States, the end whereof is liberty and real virtue, and with whom the ecclesiastical faction

[1] *Lettere*, vol. i. p. 126 ; *Opere*, vol. vi. p. 40.
[2] *Opere*, vol. vi. p. 145.

remains in bad accord. From the Jesuit colleges there never issued a son obedient to his father, devoted to his country, loyal to his prince. The cause of this is that the Jesuits employ their best energies in destroying natural affection, respect for parents, reverence for princes. Therefore they only deserve to be admired by those whose interest it is to subject family, country and government to ecclesiastical interests.'

The Provincial Letters of Pascal, which Sarpi anticipated in so many points, suffice to prove that he was justified in this hostility to ultramontanism backed up by Jesuit artifices. He was writing, be it remembered, at the very high-tide of Papal domination, when Henri IV. had been assassinated, and when the overwhelming forces of secular interests combined with intellectual progress had not as yet set limits on ecclesiastical encroachment. The dread lest Europe should succumb to Rome, now proved by subsequent events an unsubstantial nightmare, was real enough for this Venetian friar, who ran daily risk of assassination in down-trodden servile Italy, with Spanish plots threatening the arsenal, with France delivered into the hands of Florentines and casuists, with England in the grip of Stuarts, and with Germany distracted by intrigues. He could not foresee that in the course of a century the Jesuits would be discredited by their own arts, and that the Papacy would subside into a pacific sovereignty bent on securing its own temporal existence by accommodation.

The end of Sarpi's life consecrated the principles of duty to God and allegiance to his country which had animated its whole course. He fell into a bad state of health; yet nothing would divert him from the due discharge of public business. 'All the signs of the soul's speedy departure from that age-enfeebled body, were visible; but his indefatigable spirit sustained him in such wise that he bore exactly all his usual burdens. When his friends and masters bade him relax his

energies, he used to answer: My duty is to serve and not to live; there is some one daily dying in his office.[1] When at length the very sources of existence failed, and the firm brain wandered for a moment, he was once heard to say: 'Let us go to S. Mark, for it is late.'[2] The very last words he uttered, frequently repeated, but scarcely intelligible, were: 'Esto perpetua.'[3] *May Venice last for ever!* This was the dying prayer of the man who had consecrated his best faculties to the service of his country. But before he passed away into that half slumber which precedes death, he made confession to his accustomed spiritual father, received the Eucharist and Extreme Unction, and bade farewell to the Superior of the Servites, in the following sentence: 'Go ye to rest, and I will return to God, from whom I came.' With these words he closed his lips in silence, crossing his hands upon his breast and fixing his eyes upon a crucifix that stood before him.[4]

I will return to God, from whom I came.

These words—not the last, for the last were *Esto perpetua*; but the last spoken in the presence of his fraternity—have a deep significance for those who would fain understand the soul of Sarpi. When in his lifetime he spoke of the Church,

[1] Fulgenzio's *Life*, p. 98. [2] *Ibid.* p. 105. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] Letter of the Superior to the Venetian Senate, printed in the *Lettere*, vol. ii. pp. 450–453. It is worth meditating on the contrast between Sarpi's and Bruno's deaths. Sarpi died with the consolations of religion on his bed in the convent which had been his life-long home. Bruno was burned alive, with eyes averted from the crucifix in bitter scorn, after seven and a half years spent in the prisons of the Inquisition. Sarpi exhaled his last breath amid sympathising friends in the service of a grateful country. Bruno panted his death-pangs of suffocation and combustion out, surrounded by menacing Dominicans, in the midst of hostile Rome celebrating her triumphant jubilee Sarpi's last thoughts were given to the God of Christendom and the Republic. Bruno had no country; the God in whom he trusted at that grim hour, was the God within his soul, unlocalised, detached by his own reason from every Church and every creed.

it was always as 'the Church of God.' When he relegated his own anxieties for the welfare of society to a superior power, it was not to Mary, as Jesuits advised, nor even to Christ, but invariably to the Providence of God. Sarpi, we have the right to assume, lived and died a sincere believer in the God who orders and disposes of the universe; and this God, identical in fact though not in form with Bruno's, he worshipped through such symbols of ceremony and religion as had been adopted by him in his youth. An intellect so clear of insight as this, knew that 'God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' He knew that 'neither on this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem,' neither in Protestant communities nor yet in Rome was the authentic God made tangible; but that a loyal human being, created in God's image, could serve him and adore him with life-worship under any of the spiritual shapes which mortal frailty has fashioned for its needs.

To penetrate the abyss of any human personality is impossible. No man truly sees into his living neighbour's, brother's, wife's, nay even his own soul. How futile, therefore, is the effort which we make to seize and sketch the vital lineaments of men long dead, divided from us not merely by the grave which has absorbed their fleshly form and deprived us of their tone of voice, but also by those differences in thought and feeling which separate the centuries of culture! Yet this impossible task lies ever before the historian. Few characters are more patently difficult to comprehend than that of Sarpi. Ultimately, so far as it is possible to formulate a view, I think he may be defined as a Christian Stoic, possessed with two main governing ideas, duty to God and duty to Venice. His last words were for Venice; the penultimate consigned his soul to God. For a mind like his, so philosophically tempered, so versed in all the history of the world to us-wards, the materials of dispute between Catholic

and Protestant must have seemed but trifles. He stayed where he had early taken root, in his Servite convent at S. Fosca, because he there could dedicate his life to God and Venice better than in any Protestant conventicle. Had Venice inclined toward rupture with Rome, had the Republic possessed the power to make that rupture with success, Sarpi would have hailed the event gladly, as introducing for Italy the prospect of spiritual freedom, purer piety, and the overthrow of Papal-Spanish despotism. But Venice chose to abide in the old ways, and her Counsellor of State knew better than anyone that she had not the strength to cope with Spain, Rome, Jesuitry and Islam single-handed. Therefore he possessed his soul in patience, worshipping God under forms and symbols to which he had from youth been used, trusting the while that sooner or later God would break those mighty wings of Papal domination.

CHAPTER XI

GUARINI, MARINO, CHIABRERA, TASSONI

Dearth of Great Men—Guarini a Link between Tasso and the Seventeenth Century—His Biography—The 'Pastor Fido'—Qualities of Guarini as Poet—Marino the Dictator of Letters—His Riotous Youth at Naples—Life at Rome, Turin, Paris—Publishes the 'Adone'—The Epic of Voluptuousness—Character and Action of Adonis—Marino's Hypocrisy—Sentimental Sweetness—Brutal Violence—Violation of Artistic Taste—Great Powers of the Poet—Structure of the 'Adone'—Musical Fluency—Marinism—Marino's Patriotic Verses—Contrast between Chiabrera and Marino—An Aspirant after Pindar—Chiabrera's Biography—His Court Life—Efforts of Poets in the Seventeenth Century to attain to Novelty—Chiabrera's Failure—Tassoni's Life—His Thirst to Innovate—Origin of the 'Secchia Rapita'—Mock-Heroic Poetry—The Plot of this Poem—Its Peculiar Humour—Irony and Satire—Novelty of the Species—Lyrical Interbreathings—Sustained Contrast of Parody and Pathos—The Poet Testi.

Soon after 1600 it became manifest that lapse of years and ecclesiastical intolerance had rendered Italy nearly destitute of great men. Her famous sons were all either dead, murdered or exiled; reduced to silence by the scythe of time or by the Roman 'arguments of sword and halter.' Bruno burned, Vanini burned, Carnesecchi burned, Palcario burned, Bonfadio burned; Campanella banished, after a quarter of a century's imprisonment with torture; the leaders of free religious thought in exile, scattered over northern Europe. Tasso, worn out with misery and madness, rested at length in his tomb on the Janiculan; Sarpi survived the stylus of the Roman Curia with calm inscrutability at S. Fosca; Galileo

meditated with closed lips in his watch-tower behind Bello Sguardo. With Michelangelo in 1564, Palladio in 1580, Tintoretto in 1594, the godlike lineage of the Renaissance artists ended; and what children of the sixteenth century still survived to sustain the nation's prestige, to carry on its glorious traditions? The list is but a poor one. Marino, Tassoni, the younger Buonarroti, Boccalini and Chiabrera in literature. The Bolognese Academy in painting. After these men expand arid wildernesses of the Sei Cento—barocco architecture, false taste, frivolity, grimace, affectation—Jesuitry translated into culture. On one bright point, indeed, the eye rests with hope and comfort. Palestrina, when he died in 1594, did not close but opened an age for music. His posterity, those composers, lutists, violists and singers, from whom the modern art of arts has drawn her being, down to the sweet fellowship of Pergolese, Marcello and Jomelli, of Guarneri, Amati and Stradivari, of Farinelli, Caffarielli and La Romanina, were as yet but rising dimly heralded with light of dawn upon their foreheads.

In making the transition from the 'Gerusalemme' to the 'Adone,' from the last great poem of the Cinque Cento to the epic of the Sei Cento, it is indispensable that notice should be taken of the 'Pastor Fido' and its author. Giambattista Guarini forms a link between Tasso and the poets of the seventeenth century. He belonged less to the Renaissance, more to the culture of the age created by the Council of Trent, than did Tasso. His life, in many of its details similar, in others most dissimilar, to that of Tasso, illustrates and helps us in some measure to explain the latter. It must therefore form the subject of a somewhat detailed study.

Guarini drew his blood on the paternal side from the illustrious humanist Guarino of Verona, who settled at Ferrara in the fifteenth century as tutor to Lionello d'Este.[1] By

[1] See Vol. II. *The Revival of Learning*, pp. 216–218.

his mother he claimed descent from the Florentine house of Machiavelli. Born in 1537, he was seven years older than Torquato Tasso, whom he survived eighteen years, not closing his long life until 1612. He received a solid education both at Pisa and Padua, and was called at the early age of eighteen to profess moral philosophy in the University of Ferrara. Being of noble birth and inheriting a considerable patrimony, Guarini might have enjoyed a life of uninterrupted literary leisure, if he had chosen to forego empty honours and shun the idle distractions of Courts. But it was the fate of distinguished men in that age to plunge into those quicksands. Guarini had a character and intellect suited to the conduct of state affairs; and he shared the delusion prevalent among his contemporaries, that the petty Italian principalities could offer a field for the exercise of these talents. 'If our country is reduced to the sole government of a prince,' he writes, 'the man who serves his prince will serve his country, a duty both natural and binding upon all.'[1] Accordingly, soon after his marriage to Taddea of the noble Bendedei family, he entered the service of Alfonso II. This was in 1567. Tasso, in his quality of gentleman to Cardinal d' Este, had already shed lustre on Ferrara through the past two years. Guarini first made Tasso's friendship at Padua, where both were Eterei and house-guests of Scipione Gonzaga. The two poets now came together in a rivalry which was not altogether amicable. The genius of Tasso, in the prime of youth and heyday of Court-favour, roused Guarini's jealousy. And yet their positions were so different that Guarini might have been well satisfied to pursue his own course without envy. A married and elder man, he had no right to compete in gallantry with the brilliant young bachelor. Destined for diplomacy and affairs of state, he had no cause to grudge the Court poet his laurels. Writing in 1595, Guarini avers that 'poetry has

[1] *Lettere del Guarini*, Venezia, 1596, p. 2.

been my pastime, never my profession ;' and yet he made it his business at Ferrara to rival Tasso both as a lyrist and as a servant of dames. Like Tasso, he suffered from the spite of Alfonso's secretaries, Pigna and Montecatino, who seem to have incarnated the malevolence of courtiers in its basest form. So far, there was a close parallel between the careers of the two men at Ferrara. But Guarini's wealth and avowed objects in life caused the Duke from the first to employ him in a different kind of service. Alfonso sent him as ambassador to Venice, Rome, and Turin, giving him the rank of Cavaliere in order that he might perform his missions with more dignity. At Turin, where he resided for some time, Guarini conceived a just opinion of the growing importance of the House of Savoy. Like all the finest spirits of his age, Tassoni, Sarpi, Chiabrera, Marino, Testi, he became convinced that if Italy were to recover her independence, it could only be by the opposition of the Dukes of Savoy to Spain. How nearly the hopes of these men were being realised by Carlo Emmanuele, and how those hopes were frustrated by Roman intrigues and the jealousy of Italian despots, is matter of history. Yet the student may observe with interest that the most penetrating minds of the sixteenth century already discerned the power by means of which, after the lapse of nearly three hundred years, the emancipation of Italy has been achieved.

In 1574 Guarini was sent to Poland, to congratulate Henri III. upon his election to that monarchy. He went a second time in the following year to conduct more delicate negotiations. The crown of Poland was now thrown open to candidature ; and more than one of the Italian Princes thought seriously of competing for this honour. The Grand Duke of Tuscany entertained the notion and abandoned it. But Alfonso II. of Ferrara, who had fought with honour in his youth in Hungary, made it a serious object of ambition.

Manolesso, the Venetian envoy in 1575 at Ferrara, relates how the Duke spent laborious hours in acquiring the German language, 'which no one learns for pleasure, since it is most barbarous, nor quickly, but with industry and large expenditure of time.' He also writes: 'The Duke aspires to greatness, nor is satisfied with his present State; and therefore he has entered into the Polish affair, encouraged thereto by his brother the Cardinal and by his ambassador in Poland.'[1]

These embassies were a serious drain upon Guarini's resources; for it appears certain that if he received any appointments, they were inadequate to the expenses of long journeys and the maintenance of a becoming state. He therefore returned to Ferrara, considerably burdened with debts; and this was just the time at which Tasso's mental derangement began to manifest itself. Between 1575 and 1579, the date of Tasso's imprisonment at Sant' Anna, the two men lived together at the Court. Guarini's rivalry induced him at this period to cultivate poetry with such success that, when the author of the 'Gerusalemme' failed, Alfonso commanded him to take the vacant place of Court poet. There is an interesting letter extant from Guarini to his friend Cornelio Bentivoglio, describing the efforts he made to comply with the Duke's pleasure. 'I strove to transform myself into another man, and, like a playactor, to reassume the character, manners and emotions of a past period. Mature in age, I forced myself to appear young; exchanged my melancholy for gaiety; affected loves I did not feel; turned my wisdom into folly, and, in a word, passed from philosopher to poet.'[2] How ill adapted he was to this masquerade existence may be gathered from another sentence in the same letter. 'I am already in my forty-fourth year, burdened with debts, the father of eight children, two of my sons old enough to be my judges, and with my daughters to marry.'

[1] Alberi, *Relazioni*, serie 2, vol. ii. pp. 423–425. [2] *Lettere*, p. 195.

At last, abandoning this uncongenial strain upon his faculties, Guarini retired in 1582 to the villa which he had built upon his ancestral estate in the Polesine, that delightful rustic region between Adige and Po. Here he gave himself up to the cares of his family, the nursing of his dilapidated fortune, and the composition of the 'Pastor Fido.' It is not yet the time to speak of that work, upon which Guarini's fame as poet rests; for the drama, though suggested by Tasso's 'Aminta,' was not finally perfected until 1602.[1] Yet we may pause to remark upon the circumstances under which he wrote it. A disappointed courtier, past the prime of manhood, feeling his true vocation to be for severe studies and practical affairs, he yet devoted years of leisure to the slow elaboration of a dramatic masterpiece which is worthy to rank with the classics of Italian literature. During this period his domestic lot was not a happy one. He lost his wife, quarrelled with his elder sons, and involved himself in a series of lawsuits.[2] Litigation seems to have been an inveterate vice of his maturity, and he bequeathed to his descendants a coil of legal troubles. Having married one of his daughters, Anna, to Count Ercole Trotti, he had the misery of hearing in 1596 that she had fallen an innocent victim to her husband's jealousy, and that his third son, Girolamo, connived at her assassination. In the midst of these annoyances and sorrows, he maintained a grave and robust attitude, uttering none of those querulous lamentations which flowed so readily from Tasso's pen.

Tasso had used the Pastoral Drama to idealise Courts. Guarini vented all the bitterness of his soul against them in his 'Pastor Fido.' He also wrote from his retirement: 'I am

[1] In this year it was published with the author's revision by Ciotto at Venice. It had been represented at Turin in 1585, and first printed at Venice in 1590.

[2] Guarini may be compared with Trissino in these points of his private life. See Vol. V. *Italian Literature*, pp. 264, 265.

at ease in the enjoyment of liberty, studies, the management of my household.'[1] Yet in 1585, while on a visit to Turin, he again accepted proposals from Alfonso. He had gone there in order to superintend the first representation of his Pastoral, which was dedicated to the Duke of Savoy. Extremely averse to his old servants taking office under other princes, the Duke of Ferrara seems to have feared lest Guarini should pass into the Court of Carlo Emmanuele. He therefore appointed him Secretary of State; and Guarini entered upon the post in the same year that Tasso issued from his prison. This reconciliation did not last long. Alfonso took the side of Alessandro Guarini in a lawsuit with his father; and the irritable poet retired in indignation to Florence. The Duke of Ferrara, however, was determined that he should not serve another master. At Florence, Turin, Mantua and Rome, his attempts to obtain firm foothold in offices of trust were invariably frustrated; and Coccapani, the Duke's envoy, hinted that if Guarini were not circumspect, 'he might suffer the same fate as Tasso.' To shut Guarini up in a madhouse would have been difficult. Still he might easily have been despatched by the poniard; and these words throw not insignificant light upon Tasso's terror of assassination.

The Duke Alfonso died in 1597, and Ferrara reverted to the Holy See. Upon this occasion, Guarini was free to follow his own inclinations. He therefore established himself at the Court of the Grand Duke, into whose confidence he entered upon terms of flattering familiarity. Ferdinando de' Medici 'fell in love with him as a man may with a fine woman,' says his son Alessandro in one of his apologetic writings. This, however, meant but little; for compliments passed freely between princes and their courtiers; which, when affairs of purse or honour were at stake, soon turned to discontent and hatred. So it fared with Guarini at Florence. His son,

[1] *Lettere*, p. 196.

Guarino, made a marriage of which he disapproved, but which the Grand Duke countenanced. So slight a disagreement snapped the ties of friendship, and the restless poet removed to the Court of Urbino. There the last Duke of the House of Rovere, Francesco Maria II., Tasso's schoolfellow and patron, was spending his widowed years in gloomy Spanish pride. The mortmain of the Church was soon to fall upon Urbino, as it had already fallen on Ferrara. Guarini wrote: 'The former Court in Italy is a dead thing. One may see the shadow, but not the substance of it nowadays. Ours is an age of appearances, and one goes a-masquerading all the year.' A sad but sincere epitaph, inscribed by one who had gone the round of all the Courts of Italy, and had survived the grand free life of the Renaissance.

These words close Guarini's career as courtier. He returned to Ferrara in 1604, and in 1605 carried the compliments of that now Pontifical city to Paul V. in Rome on his election to the Papacy. Upon this occasion Cardinal Bellarmino told him that he had inflicted as much harm on Christendom by his 'Pastor Fido' as Luther and Calvin by their heresies. He retorted with a sarcasm which has not been transmitted to us, but which may probably have reflected on the pollution of Christian morals by the Jesuits. In 1612 Guarini died at Venice, whither he was summoned by one of his innumerable and interminable lawsuits.

Bellarmino's censure of the 'Pastor Fido' strikes a modern reader as inexplicably severe. Yet it is certain that the dissolute seventeenth century recognised this drama as one of the most potent agents of corruption. Not infrequent references in the literature of that age to the ruin of families and reputations by its means, warn us to remember how difficult it is to estimate the ethical sensibilities of society in periods remote from our own.[1] In the course of the analysis which

[1] *Il Pastor Fido*, per cura di G. Casella (Firenze, Barbèra, 1866), p. liv.

I now propose to make of this play, I shall attempt to show how, coming midway between Tasso's 'Aminta' and Marino's 'Adone,' and appealing to the dominant musical enthusiasms of the epoch, Guarini's 'Pastor Fido' may have merited the condemnation of far-sighted moralists. Not censurable in itself, it was so related to the sentimental sensuality of its period as to form a link in the chain of enervation which weighed on Italy.

The 'Pastor Fido' is a tragi-comedy, as its author points out with some elaboration in the critical essay he composed upon that species of the drama. The scene is laid in Arcadia, where according to Guarini it was customary to sacrifice a maiden each year to Diana, in expiation of an ancient curse brought upon the country by a woman's infidelity. An oracle has declared that when two scions of divine lineage are united in marriage, and a faithful shepherd atones for woman's faithlessness, this inhuman rite shall cease. The only youth and girl who fulfil these conditions of divine descent are the daughter of Titiro named Amarilli, and Silvio, the son of the high priest Montano. They have accordingly been betrothed. But Silvio is indifferent to womankind in general, and Amarilli loves a handsome stranger, Mirtillo, supposed to be the son of Carino. The plot turns upon the unexpected fulfilment of the prophecy, in spite of the human means which have been blindly taken to secure its accomplishment. Amarilli is condemned to death for suspected misconduct with a lover; and Mirtillo, who has substituted himself as victim in her place, is found to be the lost son of Montano. This solution of the intrigue, effected by an anagnorisis like that of the 'Œdipus Tyrannus,' supplies a series of dramatic scenes and thrilling situations in the last act. Meanwhile the passion of Dorinda for Silvio, and the accident whereby he is brought to return her affection at the moment when his dart has wounded her, form a picturesque underplot of considerable interest. Both

plot and underplot are so connected in the main action and so interwoven by links of mutual dependency that they form one richly varied fabric. Regarded as a piece of cunning mechanism, the complicated structure of the 'Pastor Fido' leaves nothing to be desired. In its kind, this pastoral drama is a monumental work of art, glittering and faultless like a polished basrelief of hard Corinthian bronze. Each motive has been carefully prepared, each situation amply and logically developed. The characters are firmly traced, and sustained with consistency. The cold and eager hunter Silvio contrasts with tender and romantic Mirtillo. Corisca's meretricious arts and systematised profligacy enhance the pure affection of Amarilli. Dorinda presents another type of love, so impulsive that it conquers maidenly modesty. The Satyr is a creature of rude lust, foiled in its brutal appetite by the courtesan Corisca's wiliness. Carino brings the corruption of towns into comparison with the innocence of the country.

In Carino the poet painted his own experience; and here his satire upon the Court of Ferrara is none the less biting because it takes the form of well-weighed and gravely measured censure, instead of vehement invective. The following lines may serve as a specimen of Guarini's style in this species:—

I' mi pensai che ne' reali alberghi
Fossero tanto più le genti umane,
Quant' esse han più di tutto quel dovizia,
Ond' è l' umanità sì nobil fregio.
Ma mi trovai tutto 'l contrario, Uranio.
Gente di nome e di parlar cortese,
Ma d opre scarsa e di pietà nemica
Gente placida in vista e mansueta,
Ma piu del cupo mar tumida e fera:
Gente sol d' apparenza, in cui se miri
Viso di carità, mente d' invidia
Poi trovi, e 'n dritto sguardo animo bieco,
E minor fede allor che più lusinga.
Quel ch' altrove è virtù, quivi è difetto:

Dir vero, oprar non torto, amar non finto,
Pietà sincera, invïolabil fede,
E di core e di man vita innocente,
Stiman d' animo vil, di basso ingegno,
Sciocchezza e vanità degna di riso.
L' ingannare, il mentir, la frode, il furto,
E la rapina di pietà vestita,
Crescer col danno e precipizio altrui,
E far a sè dell' altrui biasimo onore,
Son le virtù di quella gente infida.
Non merto, non valor, non riverenza,
Nè d' età nè di grado nè di legge;
Non freno di vergogna, non rispetto
Nè d' amor nè di sangue, non memoria
Di ricevuto ben; nè, finalmente,
Cosa sì venerabile o sì santa
O sì giusta esser può, ch' a quella vasta
Cupidigia d' onori, a quella ingorda
Fama d' avere, invïolabil sia.

The 'Pastor Fido' was written in open emulation of Tasso's 'Aminta,' and many of its most brilliant passages are borrowed from that play. Such, for example, is the Chorus on the Golden Age which closes the fourth act. Such, too, is the long description by Mirtillo of the kiss he stole from Amarilli (act ii. sc. 1). The motive here is taken from 'Rinaldo' (canto v.), and the spirit from 'Aminta' (act i. sc. 2). Guarini's Satyr is a studied picture from the sketch in Tasso's pastoral. The dialogue between Silvio and Linco (act i. sc. 1) with its lyrical refrain:

Lascia, lascia le selve,
Folle garzon, lascia le fere, ed ama:

reproduces the dialogue between Silvia and Dafne (act i. sc. 1) with its similar refrain:

Cangia, cangia consiglio,
Pazzarella che sei.

In all these instances Guarini works up Tasso's motives into more elaborate forms. He expands the simple suggestions of his model; and employs the artifices of rhetoric where Tasso yielded to inspiration. One example will suffice to contrast the methods of the spontaneous and the reflective poet. Tasso with divine impulse had exclaimed:

> Odi quell' usignuolo,
> Che va di ramo in ramo
> Cantando: Io amo, io amo!

This, in Guarini's hands, becomes:

> Quell' augellin, che canta
> Si dolcemente, e lascivetto vola
> Or dall' abete al faggio,
> Ed or dal faggio al mirto,
> S' avesse umano spirto,
> Direbbe: Ardo d' amore, ardo d' amore.

Here a laborious effort of the constructive fancy has been substituted for a single flash of sympathetic imagination. Tasso does not doubt that the nightingale is pouring out her love in song. Guarini says that if the bird had human soul, it would exclaim, 'Ardo d' amore.' Tasso sees it flying from branch to branch. Guarini teazes our sense of mental vision by particularising pine and beech and myrtle. The same is true of Linco's speech in general when compared with Dafne's on the ruling power of love in earth and heaven.

Of imagination in the true sense of the term Guarini had none. Of fancy, dwelling gracefully, ingeniously, suggestively, upon externals he had plenty. The minute care with which he worked out each vein of thought and spun each thread of sentiment, was that of the rhetorician rather than the poet. Tasso had made Aminta say:

> La semplicetta Silvia
> Pietosa del mio male,
> S' offrì di dar aita
> Alla finta ferita, ahi lasso! e fece

Più cupa, e più mortale
La mia piaga verace,
Quando le labbra sue
Giunse alle labbra mie.
Nè l' api d' alcun fiore
Colgan si dolce il sugo,
Come fu dolce il mel, ch' allora io colsi
Da quelle fresche rose.

Now listen to Guarini's Mirtillo:

Amor si stava, Ergasto,
Com' ape suol, nelle due fresche rose
Di quelle labbra ascoso;
E mentre ella si stette
Con la baciata bocca
Al baciar della mia
Immobile e ristretta,
La dolcezza del mèl sola gustai;
Ma poichè mi s' offerse anch' ella, e porse
L' una e l' altra dolcissima sua rosa. . . .

This is enough to illustrate Guarini's laborious method of adding touch to touch without augmenting the force of the picture.[1] We find already here the transition from Tasso's measured art to the fantastic prolixity of Marino. And though Guarini was upon the whole chaste in use of language, his rhetorical love of amplification and fanciful refinement not unfrequently betrayed him into Marinistic conceits. Dorinda, for instance, thus addresses Silvio (act iv. sc. 9):

[1] I might have further illustrated this point by quoting the thirty-five lines in which Titiro compares a maiden to the rose which fades upon the spray after the fervours of the noon have robbed its freshness (act i. sc. 4). To contest the beauty of the comparison would be impossible. Yet when we turn to the two passages in Ariosto (*Orl. Fur* i. 42, 43, and xxiv. 80) on which it has been modelled, we shall perceive how much Guarini lost in force by not writing with his eye upon the object or with the authenticity of inward vision, but with a self-conscious effort to improve by artifices and refinements upon something he has read. See my essay on 'The Pathos of the Rose' in *Time*, April, 1886.

O bellissimo scoglio
Già dall' onda e dal vento
Delle lagrime mie, de' miei sospiri
Si spesso invan percosso!

Sighs are said to be (act i. sc. 2):

impetuosi venti
Che spiran nell' incendio, e 'l fan maggiore
Con turbini d' Amore,
Ch' apportan sempre ai miserelli amanti
Foschi nembi di duol, piogge di pianti.

From this to the style of the 'Adone' there was only one step to be taken.

Though the scene of the 'Pastor Fido' was laid in Arcadia, the play really represented polite Italian society. In the softness of its sentiment, its voluptuous verbal melody, and its reiterated descant upon effeminate love-pleasure, it corresponded exactly to the spirit of its age.[1] This was the secret of its success; and this explains its seduction. Not Corisca's wanton blandishments and professed cynicism, but Mirtillo's rapturous dithyrambs on kissing, Dorinda's melting moods of tenderness, and Amarilli's delicate regrets that love must be postponed to honour, justified Bellarmino's censure. Without any-

[1] Even Silvio, the most masculine of the young men, whose heart is closed to love, appears before us thus:

Oh Silvio, Silvio! a che ti diè Natura
Ne' più begli anni tuoi
Fior di beltà sì delicato e vago,
Se tu se' tanto a calpestarlo intento?
Che s' avess' io cotesta tua sì bella
E sì fiorita guancia,
Addio selve, direi:
E seguendo altre fere,
E la vita passando in festa e 'n gioco,
Farei la state all' ombra, e 'l verno al foco.

where transgressing the limits of decorum, the 'Pastor Fido' is steeped in sensuousness. The sentiment of love idealised in Mirtillo and Amarilli is pure and self-sacrificing. *Ama l' onestà mia, s' amante sei,* says this maiden to her lover; and he obeys her. Yet, though the drama is dedicated to virtue, no one can read it without perceiving the blandishments of its luxurious rhetoric. The sensual refinement proper to an age of social decadence found in it exact expression, and it became the code of gallantry for the next two centuries.

Meanwhile the literary dictator of the seventeenth century was undoubtedly Marino. On him devolved the sceptre which Petrarch bequeathed to Politian, Politian to Bembo, and Bembo to Torquato Tasso. In natural gifts he was no unworthy successor of these poets, though the gifts he shared with them were conspicuously employed by him for purposes below the scope of any of his predecessors. In artistic achievement he concentrated the less admirable qualities of all, and brought the Italian poetry of the Renaissance to a close by exaggerating its previous defects. Yet, as a man, Marino is interesting, more interesting in many respects than the melancholy discontented Tasso. He accepted the conditions of his age with genial and careless sympathy, making himself at once its idol, its interpreter, and its buffoon. Finally, he illustrates the law of change which transferred to Neapolitans in this age the sceptre which had formerly been swayed by Tuscans and Lombards.[1]

Giovanni Battista Marino was born at Naples in 1569. His father, a jurist of eminence, bred him for the law. But the attractions of poetry and pleasure were irresistible by this mobile son of the warm South—

[1] Telesio, Bruno, Campanella, Salvator Rosa, Vico, were, like Marino, natives of the Regno.

La lusinga del Genio in me prevalse,
E la toga deposta, altrui lasciai
Parolette smaltir mendaci e false.
Nè dubbi testi interpretar curai,
Nè discordi accordar chiose mi calse,
Quella stimando sol perfetta legge
Che de' sensi sfrenati il fren corregge.

Legge omai più non v' ha la qual per dritto
Punisca il fallo o ricompensi il merto.
Sembra quando è fin quì deciso e scritto
D' opinion confuse abisso incerto.
Dalle calumnie il litigante afflitto
Somiglia in vasto mar legno inesperto.
Reggono il tutto con affetto ingordo,
Passion cieca ed interesse sordo.

Such, in the poet's maturity, was his judgment upon law; and probably he expressed the same opinion with frankness in his youth. Seeing these dispositions in his son, the severe parent cast him out of doors, and young Marino was free to indulge vagabond instincts with lazzaroni and loose companions on the quays and strands of Naples. In that luxurious climate a healthy native, full of youth and vigour, needs but little to support existence. Marino set his wits to work, and reaped too facile laurels in the fields of Venus and the Muses. His verses speedily attracted the notice of noble patrons, among whom the Duke of Bovino, the Prince of Conca, and Tasso's friend the Marquis Manso have to be commemorated. They took care that so genuine and genial a poet should not starve. It was in one of Manso's palaces that Marino had an opportunity of worshipping the singer of Armida and Erminia at a distance. He had already acquired dubious celebrity as a juvenile Don Juan and a writer of audaciously licentious lyrics, when disaster overtook him. He assisted one of his profligate friends in the abduction of a girl. For this breach of the law both were thrown together

into prison, and Marino only escaped justice by the sudden death of his accomplice. His patrons now thought it desirable that he should leave Naples for a time. Accordingly they sent him with letters of recommendation to Rome, where he was well received by members of the Crescenzio and Aldobrandino families. The Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandino made him private secretary, and took him on a journey to Ravenna and Turin. From the commencement to the end of his literary career Marino's march through life was one triumphal progress. At Turin, as formerly in Naples and Rome, he achieved a notable success. The Duke of Savoy, Carlo Emmanuele, offered him a place at Court, appointed him secretary, and dubbed him Knight of S. Maurice.

Vidi la corte, e nella corte io vidi
Promesse lunghe e guiderdoni avari,
Favori ingiusti e patrocini infidi,
Speranze dolci e pentimenti amari,
Sorrisi traditor, vezzi omicidi,
Ed acquisti dubbiosi e danni chiari,
E voti vani ed idoli bugiardi,
Onde il male è sicuro e il ben vien tardi.

It was the custom of all poets in that age to live in Courts and to abuse them, to adulate princes and to vilify these patrons. Marino, however, had real cause to complain of the treachery of courtiers. He appears to have been a man of easy-going temper, popular among acquaintances, and serviceable to the society he frequented. This comradely disposition did not save him, however, from jealousies and hatreds; for he had, besides, a Neapolitan's inclination for satire. There was a Genoese poetaster named Gasparo Murtola established in Court-service at Turin, who had recently composed a lumbering poem, 'Il Mondo Creato.' Marino made fun of it in a sonnet; Murtola retorted; and a warfare of invectives began which equalled for scurrility and

filth the duels of Poggio and Valla. Murtola, seeing that he was likely to be worsted by his livelier antagonist, waited for him one day round a corner, gun in hand. The gun was discharged, and wounded, not Marino, but a favourite servant of the Duke. For this offence the assassin was condemned to death; and would apparently have been executed, but for Marino's generosity. He procured his enemy's pardon, and was repaid with the blackest ingratitude. On his release from prison Murtola laid hands upon a satire, 'La Cuccagna,' written some time previously by his rival. This he laid before the Duke, as a seditious attack upon the government of Savoy. Marino now in his turn was imprisoned; but he proved, through the intervention of Manso, that the 'Cuccagna' had been published long before his arrival at Turin. Disgusted by these incidents, he next accepted an invitation from the French Court, and journeyed to Paris in 1615, where the Italianated society of that city received him like a living Phoebus. Maria de' Medici, as Regent, with Concini for her counsellor and lover, was then in all her vulgar glory. Richelieu's star had not arisen to eclipse Italian intrigue and to form French taste by the Academy. D'Urfè and Du Bartas, more marinistic than Marino, more euphuistic than Euphues, gave laws to literature; and the pageant pictures by Rubens, which still adorn the Gallery of the Louvre, marked the full-blown and sensuous splendour of Maria's equipage. Marino's genius corresponded nicely to the environment in which he now found himself; the Italians of the French Court discerned in him the poet who could best express their ideal of existence. He was idolised, glutted with gold, indulged and flattered to the top of his bent. Yearly appointments estimated at 10,000 crowns were augmented by presents in return for complimentary verses or for copies of the poem he was then composing. This poem was the 'Adone,' the theme of which had been suggested by Carlo

Emmanuele, and which he now adroitly used as a means of flattering the French throne. First printed at Paris in 1623, its reception both there and in Italy secured apotheosis in his lifetime for the poet.[1] One minor point in this magnificent first folio edition of 'Adone' deserves notice, as not uncharacteristic of the age. Only two Cantos out of the twenty are distinguished by anything peculiar in their engraved decorations. Of these two, the eleventh, displays the shield of France; the thirteenth, which describes Falserina's incantations and enchantments, is ornamented with the symbol of the Jesuits, I.H.S. For this the publishers alone were probably responsible. Yet it may stand as a parable of all-pervasive Jesuitry. Even among the roses and raptures of the most voluptuous poem of the century their presence makes itself felt, as though to hint that the 'Adone' is capable of being used according to Jesuitical rules of casuistry A.M.D.G. One warning voice was raised before the publication of this epic. Cardinal Bentivoglio wrote from Italy beseeching Marino to 'purge it of lasciviousness in such wise that it may not have to dread the lash of our Italian censure.' Whether he followed this advice, in other words whether the original MS. of the 'Adone' was more openly licentious than the published poem, I do not know. Anyhow, it was put upon the Index in 1627. This does not, however, appear to have impaired its popularity, or to have injured its author's reputation. Soon after the appearance of 'Adone,' Marino, then past fifty, returned to Naples. He was desirous of reposing on his laurels, wealthy, honoured, and adored, among the scenes from which he fled in danger and disgrace thirty years before. His entrance into Naples was an ovation. The lazzaroni came to meet his coach, dancing and scattering roses; noblemen attended him on horseback; ladies gazed on

[1] It is worth noting that Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* was first printed in 1593, thirty years previously.

him from balconies. A banner waving to the wind announced the advent of 'that ocean of incomparable learning, soul of lyres, subject for pens, material for ink, most eloquent, most fertile, phoenix of felicity, ornament of the laurel, of swans in their divine leisure chief and uncontested leader.' At Naples he died in 1625—felicitous in not having survived the fame which attended him through life and reached its climax just before his death.

The 'Adone' strikes us at first sight as the supreme poem of epicene voluptuousness. Its smooth-chinned hero, beautiful as a girl, soft as a girl, sentimental as a girl, with nothing of the man about him—except that 'Nature, as she wrought him, fell adoting'—threads a labyrinth of suggestive adventures, in each of which he is more the patient than the agent of desire. Mercury introduces him to our attention in a series of those fables (tales of Narcissus, Ganymede, Cyparissus, Hylas, Atys) by which antiquity figured the seductiveness of adolescence. Venus woos him, and Falserina tries to force him. Captured in feminine attire by brigands, he is detained in a cave as the mistress of their chief, and doted on by the effeminate companion of his prison. Finally, he contends for the throne of Cyprus with a band of luxurious youths—

Bardassonacci, paggi da taverna.

The crown is destined for the physically fairest. The rival charms of the competitors are minutely noted, their personal blemishes sagaciously detected, by a council of pleasure-sated worldlings. In his death Adonis succumbs to the assault of a boar, fatally inflamed with lust, who wounds the young man in his groin, dealing destruction where the beast meant only amorous caresses. Gods and goddesses console Venus in her sorrow for his loss, each of whom relates the tale of similar disasters. Among these legends Apollo's love for Hyacinth and Phœbus' love for Pampinus figure conspicuously. Thus

Marino's Adonis excites unhealthy interest by the spectacle of boyhood exposed to the caprices and allurements of both sexes doting on unfledged virility.

What contributes to this effect, in the central motive of the poem, is that Venus herself is no artless virgin, no innocent Chloe, corresponding to a rustic Daphnis. She is already wife, mother, adulteress, *femme entretenue*, before she meets the lad. Her method of treating him is that of a licentious queen, who, after seducing page or groom, keeps the instrument of her pleasures in seclusion for occasional indulgence during intervals of public business. Vulcan and Mars, her husband and her *cicisbeo*, contest the woman's right to this caprice; and when the god of war compels, she yields him the crapulous fruition of her charms before the eyes of her disconsolate boy-paramour. Her preoccupation with Court affairs in Cythera—balls, pageants, sacrifices, and a people's homage—brings about the catastrophe. Through her temporary neglect, Adonis falls victim to a conspiracy of the gods. Thus the part which the female plays in this amorous epic is that of an accomplished courtesan, highly placed in society. All the pathos, all the attraction of beauty and of sentiment, is reserved for the adolescent male.

This fact, though disagreeable, has to be noted. It is too characteristic of the wave of feeling at that time passing over Europe, to be ignored. The morbid strain which touched the Courts alike of Valois, Medici, and Stuarts; which infected the poetry of Marlowe and of Shakespeare; which cast a sickly pallor even over sainthood and over painting in the school of Bologna, cannot be neglected. In Marino's 'Adone' it reaches its artistic climax.[1]

[1] Ferrari, in his *Rivoluzioni d' Italia*, vol. iii. p. 563, observes: 'Una Venere sospetta versa lagrime forse maschili sul bellissimo Adonide,' &c. Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, in like manner, is so written as to force the reader to feel with Venus the seduction of Adonis.

This, however, is not the main point about the poem. The 'Adone' should rather be classed as the epic of voluptuousness in all its forms and species. If the love-poetry of the Italian Renaissance began with the sensuality of Boccaccio's 'Amorosa Visione,' it ended, after traversing the idyll, the novel, the pastoral, the elegy and the romance, in the more complex sensuality of Marino's 'Adone;' for this, like the 'Amorosa Visione,' but far more emphatically, proclaims the beatification of man by sexual pleasure:—

> Tramortiscon di gioia ebbre e languenti
> L' anime stanche, al ciel d' Amor rapite.
> Gl' iterati sospiri, i rotti accenti,
> Le dolcissime guerre e le ferite,
> Narrar non so—fresche aure, onde correnti,
> Voi che il miraste, e ben l' udiste, il dite!
> Voi secretari de' felici amori,
> Verdi mirti, alti pini, ombrosi allori! (Canto viii.)

Thus voluptuousness has its transcendentalism; and Marino finds even his prolific vocabulary inadequate to express the mysteries of this heaven of sensuous delights.[1]

It must not be thought that the 'Adone' is an obscene poem. Marino was too skilful a master in the craft of pleasure to revolt or to regale his readers with grossness. He had too much of the Neapolitan's frank self-abandonment to nature for broad indecency in art to afford him special satisfaction; and the taste of his age demanded innuendo. The laureate of Courts and cities saturated with licentiousness knew well that Coan vestments are more provocative than nudity. It was his object to flatter the senses and seduce the understanding rather than to stimulate coarse appetite. Refinement was the aphrodisiac of a sated society, and millinery

[1] With the stanza quoted above Marino closes the cycle which Boccaccio in the *Amorosa Visione* (canto xlix.) had opened.

formed a main ingredient in its love-philtres.[1] Marino, therefore, took the carnal instincts for granted, and played upon them as a lutist plays upon the strings of some lax thrilling instrument. Of moral judgment, of antipathy to this or that form of lust, of prejudice or preference in the material of pleasure, there is no trace. He shows himself equally indulgent to the passion of Mirra for her father, of Jove for Ganymede, of Bacchus for Pampinus, of Venus for Adonis, of Apollo for Hyacinth. He tells the disgusting story of Cinisca with the same fluent ease as the lovely tale of Psyche; passes with the same light touch over Falserina at the bedside of Adonis and Feronia in his dungeon; uses the same palette for the picture of Venus caressing Mars and the struggles of the nymph and satyr. All he demanded was a basis of soft sensuality, from which, as from putrescent soil, might spring the pale and scented flower of artful luxury.

In harmony with the spirit of an age reformed or deformed by the Catholic Revival, Marino parades cynical hypocrisy. The eighth canto of 'Adone' is an elaborately wrought initiation into the mysteries of carnal pleasure. It is a hymn to the sense of touch:[2]

Ogni altro senso può ben di leggiero
Deluso esser talor da falsi oggetti:
Questo sol no, lo qual sempre è del vero
Fido ministro e padre dei diletti.
Gli altri non possedendo il corpo intero,
Ma qualche parte sol, non son perfetti.
Questo con atto universal distende
Le sue forze per tutto, e tutto il prende.

[1] On this point I may call attention to the elaborate portraits drawn by Marino (canto xvi.) of the seven young men who contend with Adonis for the prize of beauty and the crown of Cyprus. Quite as many words are bestowed upon their costumes, jewelry and hair-dressing as upon their personal charms.

[2] I have pleasure in inviting my readers to study the true doctrine regarding the place of touch among the senses as laid down by Ruskin in *Modern Painters*, part iii. sec. i, chap. ii.

We are led by subtle gradations, by labyrinthine delays, to the final beatification of Adonis. Picture is interwoven with picture, each in turn contributing to the panorama of sensual Paradise. Yet while straining all the resources of his art, with intense sympathy, to seduce his reader, the poet drops of set purpose phrases like the following:

> Flora non so, non so se Frine o Taide
> Trovar mai seppe oscenità si laide.

Here the ape masked in the man turns round and grins, gibbering vulgar words to point his meaning, and casting dirt on his pretended decency. While racking the resources of allusive diction to veil and to suggest an immodest movement of his hero (Adonis being goaded beyond the bounds of boyish delicacy by lascivious sights), he suddenly subsides with a knavish titter into prose:

> Così il fanciullo all' inonesto gioco.

But the end of all this practice is that innocent Adonis has been conducted by slow and artfully contrived approaches to a wanton's embrace, and that the spectators of his seduction have become, as it were, parties to his fall. To make Marino's cynicism of hypocrisy more glaring, he prefaces each canto with an allegory, declaring that Adonis and Venus symbolise the human soul abandoned to vice, and the allurements of sensuality which work its ruin. In the poem itself, meanwhile, the hero and heroine are consistently treated as a pair of enviable, devoted, and at last unfortunate lovers.[1]

It is characteristic of the mood expressed in the 'Adone'

[1] The hypocrisy of the allegory is highly significant for this phase of Italian culture. We have seen how even Tasso condescended to apply it to his noble epic, which needed no such miserable pretence. Exquisitely grotesque was the attempt made by Centorio degli Ortensi to sanctify Bandello's *Novelle* by supplying each one of them with a moral interpretation (ed. Milano: Gio. Antonio degli Antoni, 1560. See Passano's *Novellieri in Prosa*, p. 28).

that voluptuousness should not be passionate, but sentimental. Instead of fire, the poet gives us honeyed tears to drink, and rocks the soul upon an ever-rippling tide of Lydian melody. The acme of pleasure, as conceived by him, is kissing. Twenty-three of the most inspired stanzas of the eighth canto are allotted to a panegyric of the kiss, in which delight all other amorous delights are drowned.[1] Tasso's melancholy yearning after forbidden fruit is now replaced by satiety contemplating the image of past joys with purring satisfaction. This quality of self-contented sentiment partly explains why the type of beauty adored is neither womanly nor manly, but adolescent. It has to be tender, fragile, solicitous, unripe; appealing to sensibility, not to passion, by feminine charms in nerveless and soulless boyhood. The most distinctive mark of Adonis is that he has no character, no will, no intellect. He is all sentiment, sighs, tears, pliability, and sweetness. This emasculate nature displays itself with consummate effect in the sobbing farewell, followed by the pretty pettishnesses, of the seventeenth canto.

As a contrast to his over-sweet and cloying ideal of lascivious grace, Marino counterposes extravagant forms of ugliness. He loves to describe the loathsome incantations of witches. He shows Falserina prowling among corpses on a battlefield, and injecting the congealed veins of her resuscitated victim with abominable juices. He crowds the Cave of Jealousy with monsters horrible to sight and sense; depicts the brutality of brigands; paints hideous portraits of eunuchs, deformed hags, unnameable abortions. He gloats over cruelty, and revels in violence.[2] When Mars appears upon the scene, the orchestra of lutes and cymbals with which

[1] What I have elsewhere called 'the tyranny of the kiss' in Italian poetry, begins in Tasso's *Rinaldo*, acquires vast proportions in Guarino's *Pastor Fido*, and becomes intolerable in Marino's *Adone*.

[2] See the climax to the episode of Filauro and Filora.

we had been lulled to sleep, is exchanged for a Corybantic din of dissonances. Orgonte, the emblem of pride, outdoes the hyperboles of Rodomonte and the lunes of Tamburlaine. Nowhere, either in his voluptuousness or in its counterpart of disgust, is there moderation. The Hellenic precept, 'Nothing overmuch,' the gracious Greek virtue of temperate restraint, which is for art what training is for athletes, discipline for soldiers, and pruning for orchard trees, has been violated in every canto, each phrase, the slightest motive of this poem. Sensuality can bear such violation better than sublimity; therefore the perfume of voluptuousness in the 'Adone,' though excessive, is both penetrating and profound; while those passages which aim at inspiring terror or dilating the imagination, fail totally of their effect. The ghastly, grotesque, repulsive images are so overcharged that they cease even to offend. We find ourselves in a region where tact, sense of proportion, moral judgment, and right adjustment of means to ends, have been wantonly abandoned. Marino avowed that he only aimed at surprising his readers:

È del poeta il fin la meraviglia.

But 45,000 verses of sustained astonishment, of industrious and indefatigable appeals to wonder by devices of language, devices of incident, devices of rhodomontade, devices of innuendo, devices of *capricci* and *concetti*, induce the stolidity of callousness. We leave off marvelling, and yield what is left of our sensibility to the fascination of inexhaustible picturesqueness. For, with all his faults, Marino was a master of the picturesque, and did possess an art of fascination. The picturesque, so difficult to define, so different from the pictorial and the poetical, was a quality of the seventeenth century corresponding to its defects of bad taste. And this gift no poet shared in larger measure than Marino.

Granted his own conditions, granted the emptiness of

moral and intellectual substance in the man and in his age, we are compelled to acknowledge that his literary powers were rich and various. Few writers, at the same time, illustrate the vices of decadence more luminously than this Protean poet of vacuity. Few display more clearly the 'expense of spirit in a waste of shame.' None teach the dependence of art upon moralised and humane motives more significantly than this drunken Helot of genius. His indifference to truth, his defiance of sobriety, his conviction that the sole end of art is astonishment, have doomed him to oblivion not wholly merited. The critic, whose duty forces him to read through the 'Adone,' will be left bewildered by the spectacle of such profuse wealth so wantonly squandered.[1] In spite of fatigue, in spite of disgust, he will probably be constrained to record his opinion that, while Tasso represented the last effort of noble poetry struggling after modern expression under outworn forms of the Classical Revival. it was left for Marino in his levity and license to evoke a real and novel though *rococo* form, which nicely corresponded to the temper of his times, and determined the immediate future of art. For this reason he requires the attention which has here been paid him.

But how, it may be asked, was it possible to expand the

[1] In support of this opinion upon Marino's merit as a poet, I will cite the episode of Clizio (canto i. p. 17); the tale of Psyche (iv. 65); the tale of the nightingale and the boy—which occurs both in Ford and Crashaw, by the way (vii. 112); the hymn to pleasure (vii. 116); the passage of Venus and Adonis to the bath (viii. 133); the picture of the nymph and satyr (viii. 135); the personification of the Court (x. 167); the Cave of Jealousy (xii. 204–206); the jewel-garden of Falserina (xii. 218); Falserina watching Adonis asleep (xii. 225); Falserina's incantations (xiii. 233); Mars in the lap of Venus surrounded by the loves (xiii. 245); Venus disguised as a gypsy (xv. 290); the game of chess (xv. 297); the leave-taking of Venus and Adonis (xvii. 332); the phantom of dead Adonis (xviii. 357); the grief of Venus (xviii. 358–362); the tales of Hyacinth and Pampinus (xix. 372–378) The references are to ed. Napoli, Boutteaux, 1861.

story of Venus and Adonis into an epic of 45,000 lines? The answer to this question could best be given by an analysis of the twenty cantos; and since few living students have perused them, such a display of erudition would be pardonable. Marino does not, however, deserve so many pages in a work devoted to the close of the Italian Renaissance. It will suffice to say that the slender narrative of the amour of Venus and her boyish idol, his coronation as king of Cyprus, and his death by the boar's tusk, is ingeniously interwoven with a great variety of episodes. The poet finds occasion to relate the principal myths of Hellenic passion, treating these in a style which frequently reminds us of Ovid's Metamorphoses; he borrows tales from Apuleius, Lucian, and the pastoral novelists; he develops the theme of jealousy in Mars and Vulcan, introduces his own autobiography, digresses into romantic adventures by sea and land, creates a rival to Venus in the sorceress Falserina, sketches the progress of poetry in one canto, and devotes another to a panegyric of Italian princes, extols the House of France and adulates Marie de Medicis, surveys the science of the century, describes fantastic palaces and magic gardens, enters with curious minuteness into the several delights of the five senses, discourses upon Courts, ambition, avarice and honour, journeys over the Mediterranean, conducts a game of chess through fifty brilliant stanzas; in brief, while keeping his main theme in view, is careful to excite and sustain the attention of his readers by a succession of varied and ingeniously suggested novelties. Prolixity, indefatigable straining after sensational effect, interminable description, are the defects of the 'Adone;' but they are defects related to great qualities possessed by the author, to inexhaustible resources, curious knowledge, the improvisatore's facility, the trained rhetorician's dexterity in the use of language, the artist's fervid delight in the exercise of his craft.

Allowing for Marino's peculiar method, his 'Adone' has the excellence of unity which was so highly prized by the poets of his age and nation. Critics have maintained that the whole epic is but a development of the episode of Rinaldo in Armida's garden. But it is more than this. It contains all the main ingredients of the Italian Romance, with the exception of chivalry and war. There is a pastoral episode corresponding to that of Erminia among the shepherds, a magnificent enchantress in the manner of Alcina, an imprisonment of the hero which reminds us of Ruggiero in Atlante's magic castle, a journey like Astolfo's to the moon, a conflict between good and evil supernatural powers, a thread of allegory more or less apparent, a side glance at contemporary history; and these elements are so combined as to render the 'Adone' one of the many poems in the long romantic tradition. It differs mainly from its predecessors in the strict unity of subject, which subordinates each episode and each digression to the personal adventures of the heroine and hero; while the death and obsequies of Adonis afford a tragic close that is lacking to previous poems detached from the Carolingian cycle. Contemporary writers praised it as a poem of peace. But it is the poem of ignoble peace, of such peace as Italy enjoyed in servitude, when a nation of *cicisbei* had naught to occupy their energies but sensual pleasure. Ingenious as Marino truly was in conducting his romance upon so vast a scheme through all its windings to one issue, we feel that the slender tale of a boy's passion for the queen of courtesans and his metamorphosis into the scarlet windflower of the forest supplied no worthy motive for this intricate machinery. The metaphor of an alum basket crystallised upon a petty frame of wire occurs to us when we contemplate its glittering ornaments, and reflect upon the poverty of the sustaining theme. It might in fact stand for a symbol of the intellectual vacancy of the age which welcomed it with rapture,

and of the society which formed a century of taste upon its pattern.

In another and higher literary quality the 'Adone' represents that moment of Italian development. A foreigner may hardly pass magisterial judgment on its diction. Yet I venture to remark that Marino only at rare intervals attains to purity of poetic style; even his best passages are deformed, not merely by conceits to which the name of *Marinism* has been given, but also by gross vulgarities and lapses into trivial prose. Notwithstanding this want of distinction, however, he has a melody that never fails. The undulating, evenly on-flowing *cantilena* of his verbal music sustains the reader on a tide of song. That element of poetry, which, as I have observed, was developed with remarkable success by Tasso in some parts of the 'Gerusalemme,' is the main strength of the 'Adone.' With Marino the 'Chant d'Amour' never rises so high, thrills so subtly, touches the soul so sweetly and so sadly, as it does in Tasso's verse. But in all those five thousand octave stanzas it is rarely altogether absent. The singing faculty of the Neapolitan was given to this poet of voluptuousness; and if the song is neither deep nor stirring, neither stately nor sublime, it is because his soul held nothing in its vast vacuity but sensuous joy.[1] A musical Casanova, an unmalignant Aretino, he sang as vulgar nature prompted; but he always kept on singing. His partiality for detonating dissonances, squibs and crackers of pyrotechnical

[1] There are passages of pure *cantilena* in this poem, where sense is absolutely swallowed up in sound, and words become the mere vehicle for rhythmic melody. Of this verbal music the dirge of the nymphs for Adonis and the threnos of Venus afford excellent examples (xix. pp. 358–361). Note especially the stanza beginning:

Adone, Adone, o bell' Adon, tu giaci,
Nè senti i miei sospir, nè miri il pianto!
O bell' Adone, o caro Adon, tu taci,
Nè rispondi a colei che amasti tanto!

rhetoric, braying trumpets and exploding popguns, which deafen and distract our ears attuned to the suave cadence of the *cantilena*, is no less characteristic of the Neapolitan. Marino had the improvisatory exuberance, the impudence, the superficial passion, the luxurious delight in life, and the noisiness of his birthplace. He also shared its love of the grotesque as complement and contrast to pervading beauty.

A serious fault to be found with Marino's style is its involved exaggeration in description. Who, for instance, can tolerate this picture of a young man's foot shod with a blue buskin?

> L' animato del piè molle alabastro
> Che oscura il latte del sentier celeste
> Stretto alla gamba con purpureo nastro
> Di cuoio azzurro un borsacchin gli veste.

Again he carries to the point of lunacy that casuistical rhetoric, introduced by Ariosto and refined upon by Tasso, with which luckless heroines or heroes announce their doubts and difficulties to the world in long soliloquies. The ten stanzas which set forth Falserina's feelings after she has felt the pangs of love for Adonis, might pass for a parody:

> Ardo, lassa, o non ardo! ahì qual io sento
> Stranio nel cor non conosciuto affetto!
> E forse ardore? ardor non è, chè spento
> L' avrei col pianto; è ben d' ardor sospetto!
> Sospetto no, piuttosto egli è tormento.
> Come tormento fia, se dà diletto?

There is nothing more similar to this in literature than Fra Jacopone's delirium of mystic love:

> Amor amor Jesu, son giunto a porto;
> Amor amor Jesu, tu m' hai menato;
> Amor amor Jesu, dammi conforto;
> Amor amor Jesu, sì m' hai enfiammato.

Only the one is written in a Mixo-Lydian, the other in a Hyper-Phrygian mood.

And so forth through eighty lines in which every conceivable change is rung upon *Amo o non amo ? . . . Io vivo e moro pur . . . Io non ho core e lo mio cor n' ha dui.* With all this effort no one is convinced of Falserina's emotion, and her long-winded oration reads like a schoolboy's exercise upon some line of the fourth Æneid. Yet if we allow the sense of rhythmical melody to intervene between our intellectual perception and Marino's language, we shall still be able to translate these outpourings into something which upon the operatic stage would keep its value. False rhetoric and the inability to stop when enough and more than enough has been said upon any theme to be developed, are the incurable defects of Marino. His profuse *fioriture* compared with the simpler descant of Ariosto or Tasso remind us of Rossini's florid roulades beside the grace of Pergolese's or the majesty of Marcello's song.

The peculiar quality of bad taste which is known in Italy as *Marinismo*, consisted in a perpetual straining after effect by antitheses, conceits, plays on words degenerating into equivocation, and such-like rhetorical grimaces. Marino's *ars poetica* was summed up in this sentence: 'Chi non sa far stupir, vada alla striglia.' Therefore, he finds periphrases for the simplest expressions. He calls the nightingale *sirena de' boschi*, gunpowder *l' irreparabil fulmine terreno*, Columbus *il ligure Argonauta*, Galileo *il novello Endimione*. In these instances, what might have been expanded into a simile, is substituted for the proper word in order to surprise the reader. When he alludes to Dante, he poses a conundrum on that poet's surname: *Ben sull' ali liggier tre mondi canta.* The younger Palma is complimented on wresting the *palm* from Titian and Veronese. Guido Reni is apostrophised as: *Reni onde il maggior Reno all' altro cede.*[1] We are never safe in reading his pages from the whirr and whistle of such verbal fire-

[1] There is a streamlet called Reno near Bologna.

works. And yet it must be allowed that Marino's style is on the whole freer from literary affectations than that of our own Euphuists. It is only at intervals that the temptation to make a point by clever trickery seems irresistible. When he is seriously engaged upon a topic that stirs his nature to the depth, as in the eighth canto, description flows on for stanza after stanza with limpid swiftness. Another kind of artifice to which he has resort, is the repetition of a dominant word:

> Con tai lusinghe il lusinghiero amante
> La lusinghiera Dea lusinga e prega.
> . . . . .
> Godiamci, amiamci. Amor d' amor mercede,
> Degno cambio d' amore è solo amore.

This play on a word sometimes passes over into a palpable pun, as in the following pretty phrase:

> O mia dorata ed adorata Dea.

Still we feel that Shakespeare was guilty of precisely the same verbal impertinences. It is only intensity of feeling which prevents such lines as:

> Take all my loves, my love, yea take them all;
> What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?
> No love, my love, that thou may'st true love call:
> All mine was thine, before thou hadst this more:

from being Marinistic. But it must be added that this intensity of feeling renders the artifice employed sublimely natural. Here we lay our finger on the crucial point at issue in any estimate of literary mannerism. What is the force of thought, the fervour of emotion, the acute perception of truth in nature and in man, which lies behind that manneristic screen? If, as in the case of Shakespeare, sufficiency or superabundance of these essential elements is palpable, we pardon, we ignore, the euphuism. But should the quality of substance fail, then we repudiate it and despise it. Therefore

Marino, who is certainly not more euphuistic than Shakespeare, but who has immeasurably less of potent stuff in him, wears the motley of his barocco style in limbo bordering upon oblivion, while the Swan of Avon parades the same literary livery upon both summits of Parnassus. So true it is that poetry cannot be estimated apart from intellectual and moral contents. Had Marino written :

> Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down :

or :

> 'twould anger him
> To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle
> Of some strange nature, letting it there stand
> Till she had laid it and conjured it down :

or :

> The bawdy hand of the dial is now upon
> The prick of noon :

he would have furnished his accusers with far stronger diatribes against words of double meaning and licentious conceits than his own pages offer. But since it was out of the fulness of world-wisdom that Shakespeare penned those phrases for Mercutio, and set them as pendents to the impassioned descants upon love and death which he poured from the lips of Romeo, they pass condoned and unperceived.

Only poverty of matter and insincerity of fancy damn in Marino those literary affectations which he held in common with a host of writers—with Gorgias, Æschylus, Chæremon, Philostratus, among Greeks ; with Petrarch, Boccaccio, Bembo, Aretino, Tasso, Guarini, among Italians ; with Calderon and Cervantes, not to mention Gongora, among Spaniards ; with the foremost French and English writers of the Renaissance ; with all verbal artists in any age, who have sought unduly to refine upon their material of language. In a word, Marino is not condemned by his so-called Marinism. His true stigma is the inadequacy to conceive of human nature except under a

twofold mask of sensuous voluptuousness and sensuous ferocity. It is this narrow and ignoble range of imagination which constitutes his real inferiority, far more than any poetical extravagance in diction. The same mean conception of humanity brands with ignominy the four generations over which he dominated—that brood of eunuchs and courtiers, churchmen and *Cavalieri serventi*, barocco architects and brigands, casuists and bravi, grimacers, hypocrites, confessors, impostors, bastards of the spirit, who controlled Italian culture for a hundred years.

At a first glance we shall be astonished to find that this poet, who may justly be regarded as the coryphæus of Circean orgies in the seventeenth century, left in MS. a grave lament upon the woes of Italy. Marino's 'Pianto d' Italia' has no trace of Marinism. It is composed with sobriety in a pedestrian style of plainness, and it tells the truth without reserve. Italy traces her wretchedness to one sole cause, subjection under Spanish rule.

> Lascio ch' un re che di real non tiene
> Altro che il nome effemminato e vile
> A sua voglia mi reggi, e di catene
> Barbare mi circondi il piè servile.

This tyrant foments jealousy and sows seeds of discord between the Italian states. His viceroys are elected from the cruellest, the most unjust, the most rapacious, and the most luxurious of the courtiers crawling round his throne. The College of Cardinals is bought and sold. No prince dares move a finger in his family or state without consulting the Iberian senate; still less can he levy troops for self-defence. Yet throughout Europe Spanish victories have been obtained by Italian generals; the bravest soldiers in foreign armies are Italian exiles. Perhaps it may be argued that the empty titles which abound in every petty city, the fulsome promises on which those miserable vassals found their hopes, are make-

weights for such miseries. Call them rather chains to bind the nation, lures and birdlime such as snarers use. There is but one quarter to which the widowed and discrowned Queen of Nations can appeal for succour. She turns to Carlo Emmanuele, Duke of Savoy, to the hills whence cometh help. It was not, however, until two centuries after Marino penned these patriotic stanzas, that her prayer was answered. And the reflection forced upon us when we read the 'Pianto d' Italia,' is that Marino composed it to flatter a patron who at that moment entertained visionary schemes of attacking the Spanish hegemony.

To make any but an abrupt transition from Marino to Chiabrera would be impossible. It is like passing from some luxurious grove of oranges and roses to a barren hill-top without prospect over sea or champaign. We are fortunate in possessing a few pages of autobiography, from which all that is needful to remember of Gabriello Chiabrera's personal history may be extracted. He was born in 1552 at Savona, fifteen days after his father's death. His mother made a second marriage, and left him to the care of an uncle, with whom at the age of nine he went to reside in Rome. In the house of this bachelor uncle the poor little orphan pined away. Fever succeeded fever, until his guardian felt that companionship with boys in play and study was the only chance of saving so frail a life as Gabriello's. Accordingly he placed the invalid under the care of the Jesuits in their Collegio Romano. Here the child's health revived, and his education till the age of twenty throve apace. The Jesuits seem to have been liberal in their course of training; for young Chiabrera benefited by private conversation with Paolo Manuzio and Sperone Speroni, while he attended the lectures of Muretus in the university.

How different was this adolescence from that of Marino! Both youths grew to manhood without domestic influences;

and both were conspicuous in after life for the want of that affection which abounds in Tasso. But here the parallel between them ends. Marino, running wild upon the streets of Naples, taking his fill of pleasure and adventure, picking up ill-digested information at hap-hazard, and forming his poetic style as nature prompted; Chiabrera, disciplined in piety and morals by Jesuit directors, imbued with erudition by an arid scholar, a formal pedant and an accomplished rhetorician, the three chief representatives of decadent Italian humanism: no contrast can be imagined greater than that which marked these two lads out for diverse paths in literature. The one was formed to be the poet of caprice and license, openly ranking with those

Che la ragion sommettono al talento,

and making *s' ei piace ei lice* his rule of conduct and of art. The other received a rigid bent toward decorum, in religious observances, in ethical severity, and in literature of a strictly scholastic type.

Yet Chiabrera was not without the hot blood of Italian youth. His uncle died, and he found himself alone in the world. After spending a few years in the service of Cardinal Cornaro, he quarrelled with a Roman gentleman, vindicated his honour by some act of violence, and was outlawed from the city. Upon this he retired to Savona; and here again he met with similar adventures. Wounded in a brawl, he took the law into his own hands, and revenged himself upon his assailant. This punctilio proved him to be a true child of his age; and if we may credit his own account of both incidents, he behaved himself as became a gentleman of the period. It involved him, however, in serious annoyances both at Rome and Savona, from which he only extricated himself with difficulty and which impaired his fortune. Up to the age of fifty he remained unmarried, and then took a wife by whom he

had no children. He lived to the ripe age of eighty-four, always at Savona, excepting occasional visits to friends in Italian cities, and he died unmolested by serious illness after his first entrance into the Collegio Romano. How he occupied the leisure of that lengthy solitude may be gathered from his published works—two or three thick volumes of lyrics; four bulky poems of heroic narrative; twelve dramas, including two tragedies; thirty satires or epistles; and about forty miscellaneous poems in divers metres. In a word, he devoted his whole life to the art of poetry, for which he was not naturally gifted, and which he pursued in a gravely methodical spirit. It may be said at once that the body of his work, with the exception of some simple pieces of occasion, and a few chastely written epistles, is such as nobody can read without weariness.

Before investigating Chiabrera's claim to rank among Italian poets, it may be well to examine his autobiography in those points which touch upon the temper of society. Short as it is, this document is precious for the light it casts upon contemporary custom. As a writer, Chiabrera was distinguished by sobriety of judgment, rectitude, piety, purity of feeling, justice toward his fellow-workers in literature, and an earnest desire to revive the antique virtues among his countrymen. There is no reason to suppose that these estimable qualities did not distinguish him in private life. Yet eight out of the eighteen pages of his life are devoted to comically solemn details regarding the honours paid him by Italian princes. The Grand Duke of Florence, Ferdinand I., noticed him standing with uncovered head at a theatrical representation in the Pitti Palace. He bade the poet put his cap on and sit down. Cosimo, the heir-apparent, showed the same condescending courtesy. When he was at Turin, Carlo Emmanuele, Duke of Savoy, placed a coach and pair at his disposal, and allowed him 300 lire for travelling expenses to and from Savona. But this prince omitted to appoint him

lodgings in the palace, nor did he invite him to cover in the presence. This perhaps is one reason why Chiabrera refused the Duke's offer of a secretaryship at Court. Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, on the contrary, allotted him rooms and always suffered him to keep his hat on. The Pope, who was an old college friend of Chiabrera, made him handsome presents, and on one delightful occasion allowed him to hear a sermon in the Papal pew. The Doge of Genoa, officially particular in points of etiquette, always took care to bid him cover, although he was a subject born of the Republic.

Basely insignificant as are these details, they serve to show what value was then ascribed even by men of real respectability to trifling princely favours. The unction with which Chiabrera relates them, warming his cold style into a glow of satisfaction, is a practical satire upon his endeavour to resuscitate the virtues of antique republics in that Italy. To do this was his principal aim as a moralist; to revive the grand style of Pindar was his object as an artist. Each attempt involved impossibility, and argued a visionary ambition dimly conscious of its scope. Without freedom, without the living mythology of Hellas, without a triumphant national cause, in the very death of independence, at the end of a long age of glorious but artificial culture, how could Chiabrera dare to pose as Pindar? Instead of the youth of Greece ascending with free flight and all the future of the world before it, decrepit Italy, the Italy so rightly drawn by Marino in his 'Pianto,' lay grovelling in the dust of decaying thrones. Her lyrist had to sing of pallone-matches instead of Panhellenic games; to celebrate the heroic conquest of two Turkish galleys by a Tuscan fleet, instead of Marathon and Salamis; to praise S. Lucy and S. Paul with tepid fervour, instead of telling how Rhodes swam at her god's bidding upward from the waves.

One example will serve as well as many to illustrate the

false attitude assumed by Chiabrera when he posed as a new Pindar in the midst of seventeenth-century Italians. I will select the Ode to Don Cesare d' Este. There is something pathetically ridiculous in this would-be swan of the Dircean fount, this apostle of pagan virtues, admonishing the heir of Alfonso II. to prove himself an obedient son of the Church by relinquishing his Duchy of Ferrara to the Holy See. The poet asks him, in fine classic phrases, whether he could bear to look on desecrated altars, confessionals without absolving priests, chapels without choristers, a people barred with bolt and lock from Paradise. How trivial are earthly compared with heavenly crowns! How vulgar is the love of power and gold! The exhortation, exquisite enough in chastened style, closes with this hypocritical appeal to Cesare's aristocratic prejudices:

> Parli la plebe a suo volere, e pensi—
> Non con la plebe hanno da gir gli Estensi.

That is to say, nobility demands that the House of Este should desert its subjects, sacrifice its throne, crawl at a Pontiff's feet, and starve among a crowd of disthroned princes, wrapping the ragged purple of its misery around it till it, too, mixes with the people it contemns.

Hopeless as the venture was, Chiabrera made it the one preoccupation of his life, in these untoward circumstances, to remodel Italian poetry upon the Greek pattern. It was a merit of the Sei Cento, a sign of grace, that the Italians now at last threw orthodox æsthetic precepts to the winds, and avowed their inability to carry the Petrarchistic tradition further. The best of them, Campanella and Bruno, moulded vulgar language like metal in the furnace of a vehement imagination, making it the vehicle of fantastic passion and enthusiastic philosophy. From their crucible the Sonnet and the Ode emerged with no resemblance to academical standards. Grotesque, angular, gnarled, contorted, Gothic even, these

antiquated forms beneath their wayward touch were scarcely recognisable. They had become the receptacles of burning, scalding, trenchant realities. Salvator Rosa, next below the best, forced indignation to lend him wings, and scaled Parnassus with brass-bound feet and fury. Marino, bent on riveting attention by surprises, fervid with his own reality of lust, employed the octave stanza as a Turkish Bey might use an odalisque. 'The only rule worth thinking of,' he said, 'is to know how and when and where to break all rules, adapting ourselves to current taste and the fashions of the age.' His epic represents a successful, because a vivid, reaction against conventionality. The life that throbs in it, is incontestable, even though that life may be nothing better than ephemeral. With like brutality of instinct, healthy because natural, the barocco architects embraced ugliness, discord, deformity, spasm, as an escape from harmony and regularity with which the times were satiated. Prose-writers burst the bonds of Bembo, trampled on Boccaccio, revelled in the stylistic debaucheries of Bartolo. Painters, rendered academic in vain by those Fabii of Bologna who had striven to restore the commonwealth of art by temporising, launched themselves upon a sea of massacre and murder, blood and entrails, horrors of dark woods and Bacchanalia of chubby Cupids. The popular Muse of Italy meanwhile emerged with furtive grace and inexhaustible vivacity in dialectic poems, dances, Pulcinello, Bergamasque Pantaloon, and what of parody and satire, Harlequinades, and carnival diversions, any local soil might cherish.[1] All this revolt against precedent, this resurrection of primeval instinct, crude and grinning, took place, let us remember, under the eyes of the Jesuits, within the shadow of the Inquisition, in an age reformed and ordered by the Council of Trent. Art was following Aretino,

[1] See Scherillo's two books on the *Commedia dell' Arte* and the *Opera Buffa*.

the reprobate and rebel. He first amid the languors of the golden age—and this is Aretino's merit—discerned that the only escape from its inevitable exhaustion was by passing over into crudest naturalism.

But for Chiabrera, the excellent gentleman, the patronised of princes, scrupulous upon the point of honour, pupil of Jesuits, pious, twisted back on humanism by his Roman tutors, what escape was left for him? Obey the genius of his times he must. Innovate he must. He chose the least indecorous sphere at hand for innovation; and felt therewith most innocently happy. Without being precisely conscious of it, he had discovered a way of adhering to time-honoured precedent while following the general impulse to discard precedent. He threw Petrarch overboard, but he took on Pindar for his pilot. 'When I see anything eminently beautiful, or hear something, or taste something that is excellent, I say: It is Greek Poetry.' In this self-revealing sentence lies the ruling instinct of the man as scholar. The highest praise he can confer upon Italian matters, is to call them Greek Poetry. 'When I have to express my aims in verse, I compare myself to Columbus, who said that he would discover a new world or drown.' Again, in this self-revealing sentence, Chiabrera betrays the instinct which in common with his period he obeyed. He was bound to startle society by a discovery or to drown. For this, be it remembered, was the time in which Pallavicino, like Marino, declared that poetry must make men raise their eyebrows in astonishment. For Chiabrera, educated as he had been, that new world toward which he navigated was a new Hellenic style of Italian poetry; and the Theban was to guide him toward its shores. But on the voyage Chiabrera drowned; drowned for eternity in hyper-atlantic whirlpools of oblivion. Some critics, pitying so lofty, so respectable an ambition, have whispered that he found a little Island of the Blest and there

planted modest myrtles of mediocre immortality. Yet this is not the truth. On such a quest there was only failure or success. He did not succeed. His cold mincemeat from Dircean tables, tepid historic parallels, artificially concocted legends, could not create Greek poetry again beneath the ribs of death. The age was destined to be saved by music. License was its only liberty, as the 'Adone' taught. Unmusical Chiabrera, buckram'd up by old mythologies and sterling precepts, left its life untouched. His antique virtues stood, like stucco gods and goddesses, on pedestals in garden groves, and mouldered. His Pindaric flights were such as a sparrow, gazing upward at a hawk, might venture on. Those abrupt transitions, whereby he sought to simulate the lordly *sprezzatura* of the Theban eagle, 'sailing with supreme dominion through the azure deep of air,' remind us mainly of the hoppings of a frog. Chiabrera failed: failed all the more lamentably because he was so scholarly, so estimable. He is chiefly interesting now as the example of a man devoted to the Church, a pupil of Jesuits, a moralist, and a humanist, in some sense also a patriot, who felt the temper of his time, and strove to innovate in literature. Devoid of sincere sympathy with his academically chosen models, thinking he had discovered a safe path for innovation, he fell flat in the slime and perished.

Marino had human life and vulgar nature, the sensualities and frivolities of the century, to help him. Chiabrera claimed none of these advantages. What had Tassoni for his cutfit? Sound common sense, critical acumen, the irony of humour, hatred of tyrants, and humbug, an acrid temper mollified by genial love of letters, a manly spirit of independence. Last, but not least, he inherited something of the old Elysian smile which played upon the lips of Ariosto, from which Tasso's melancholy shrank discomfited, which Marino smothered in the kisses of his courtesans, and Chiabrera banned as too

ignoble for Dircean bards. This smile it was that cheered Tassoni's leisure, when, fallen on evil days, he penned the 'Secchia Rapita.'

Alessandro Tassoni was born in 1565 of a noble Modenese family. Before completing his nineteenth year he won the degree of Doctor of Laws, and afterwards spent twelve years in studying at the chief universities of Lombardy. Between 1599 and 1603 he served the Cardinal Ascanio Colonna both in Spain and Rome, as secretary. The insight he then gained into the working of Spanish despotism made him a relentless enemy of that already decadent monarchy. When Carlo Emmanuele, Duke of Savoy, sent back his Collar of the Golden Fleece in 1613 and drew the sword of resistance against Philip III., Tassoni penned two philippics against Spaniards, which are the firmest, most embittered expression of patriotism as it then existed. He had the acuteness to perceive that the Spanish state was no longer in its prime of vigour, and the noble ingenuousness to dream that Italian princes might be roused to sink their rancours in a common effort after independence. As a matter of fact, Estensi, Medici, Farnesi, Gonzaghi, all the reigning houses as yet unabsorbed by Church or Spain, preferred the predominance of a power which sanctioned their local tyrannies, irksome and degrading as that over-lordship was, to the hegemony of Piedmontese Macedon. And like all Italian patriots, strong in mind, feeble in muscle, he failed to reckon with the actual soldierly superiority of Spaniards. Italy could give generals at this epoch to her masters; but she could not count on levying privates for her own defence. Carlo Emmanuele rewarded the generous ardour of Tassoni by grants of pensions which were never paid, and by offices at Court which involved the poet-student in perilous intrigue. 'My service with the princes of the House of Savoy,' so he wrote at a later period, 'did not take its origin in benefits or favours

received or expected. It sprang from a pure spontaneous motion of the soul, which inspired me with love for the noble character of Duke Charles.' When he finally withdrew from that service, he had his portrait painted. In his hands he held a fig, and beneath the picture ran a couplet ending with the words, 'this the Court gave me.' Throughout his life Tassoni showed an independence rare in that century. His principal works were published without dedications to patrons. In the preface to his 'Remarks on Petrarch' he expressed his opinion thus: 'I leave to those who like them the fruitless dedications, not to say flatteries, which are customary nowadays. I seek no protection; for a lie does not deserve it, and truth is indifferent to it. Let such as opine that the shadow of great personages can conceal the ineptitude of authors, make the most of this advantage.' Believing firmly in astrology, he judged that his own horoscope condemned him to ill-success. It appears that he was born under the influence of Saturn, when the sun and moon were in conjunction; and he held that this combination of the heavenly bodies boded 'things noteworthy, yet not felicitous.' It was, however, difficult for a man of Tassoni's condition in that state of society to draw breath outside the circle of a Court. Accordingly, in 1626 he entered the service of the Pope's nephew, Cardinal Lodovisio. He did not find this much to his liking: 'I may compare myself to P. Emilius Metellus, when he was shod with those elegant boots which pinched his feet. Everybody said, Oh what fine boots, how well they fit! But the wretch was unable to walk in them.' On the Cardinal's death in 1632 Tassoni removed to the Court of Francesco I. of Modena, and died there in 1635.

As a writer, Tassoni, in common with the best spirits of his time, aimed at innovation. It had become palpable to the Italians that the Renaissance was over, and that they must break with the traditions of the past. This, as I have

already pointed out, was the saving virtue of the early seventeenth century; but what good fruits it might have fostered, had not the political and ecclesiastical conditions of the age been adverse, remains a matter for conjecture. 'It is my will and object to utter new opinions,' he wrote to a friend; and acting upon this principle, he attacked the chief prejudices of his age in philosophy and literature. One of his earliest publications was a miscellaneous collection of 'Divers Thoughts,' in which he derided Aristotle's 'Physics' and propounded speculations similar to those developed by Gassendi. He dared to cast scorn on Homer, as rude and barbarous, poor in the faculty of invention, taxable with at least five hundred flagrant defects. How little Tassoni really comprehended Homer may be judged from his complacent assertion that the episode of Luna and Endymion ('Secchia Rapita,' canto viii.) was composed in the Homeric manner. In truth he could estimate the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' no better than Chiabrera could the Pythians and Olympians of Pindar. A just sense of criticism failed the scholars of that age, which was too remote in its customs, too imperfect in its science of history, to understand the essence of Greek art. With equally amusing candour Tassoni passed judgments upon Dante, and thought that he had rivalled the 'Purgatory' in his description of the Dawn ('Secchia Rapita,' viii. 15, the author's note). We must, however, be circumspect and take these criticisms with a grain of salt; for one never knows how far Tassoni may be laughing in his sleeve. There is no doubt, however, regarding the sincerity of his strictures upon the Della Cruscan 'Vocabulary' of 1612, or the more famous inquiry into Petrarch's style. The 'Considerazioni sopra le Rime del Petrarca' were composed in 1602–3 during a sea voyage from Genoa to Spain. They told what now must be considered the plain truth of common sense about the affectations into which a servile study of the *Canzoniere* had

betrayed generations of Italian rhymesters. Tassoni had in view Petrarch's pedantic imitators rather than their master; and when the storm of literary fury, stirred up by his work, was raging round him, he thus established his position: 'Surely it is allowable to censure Petrarch's poems, if a man does this, not from malignant envy, but from a wish to remove the superstitions and abuses which beget such evil effects, and to confound the sects of the Rabbins hardened in their perfidy of obsolete opinion, and in particular of such as think they cannot write straight without the *falsariga* of their model.' I may observe in passing that the points in this paragraph are borrowed from a sympathising letter which Marino addressed to the author on his essay. In another place Tassoni stated, 'It was never my intention to speak evil of this poet [Petrarch], whom I have always admired above any lyrist of ancient or modern times.'

So independent in his conduct and so bold in his opinions was the author of the 'Secchia Rapita.' The composition of this poem grew out of the disputes which followed Tassoni's 'Remarks on Petrarch.' He found himself assailed by two scurrilous libels, which were traced to the Count Alessandro Brusantini, feudal lord of Culagna and Bismozza. Justice could not be obtained upon the person of so eminent a noble. Tassoni, with true Italian refinement, resolved to give himself the unique pleasure of ingenious vengeance. The name of the Count's fief supplied him with a standing dish of sarcasm. He would write a satiric poem, of which the Conte Culagna should be the burlesque hero. After ten months' labour, probably in the year 1615, the 'Secchia Rapita' already went abroad in MS.[1] Tassoni sought to pass it off as a product of his youth; but both the style and the personalities which it contained rendered this impossible.

[1] For the date 1615 see Carducci's learned essay prefixed to his edition of the *Secchia Rapita* (Barbèra, 1861).

Privately issued, the poem had a great success. 'In less than a year,' writes the author, 'more MS. copies were in circulation than are usually sent forth from the press in ten years of the most famous works.' One professional scribe made 200 ducats in the course of a few months by reproducing it; and the price paid for each copy was eight crowns. It became necessary to publish the 'Secchia Rapita.' But now arose innumerable difficulties. The printers of Modena and Padua refused; Giuliano Cassiani had been sent to prison in 1617 for publishing some verses of Testi against Spain. The Inquisition withheld its *imprimatur*. Attempts were made to have it printed on the sly at Padua; but the craftsman who engaged to execute this job was imprisoned. At last, in 1622, Tassoni contrived to have the poem published in Paris. The edition soon reached Italy. In Rome it was prohibited, but freely sold; and at last Gregory XV. allowed it to be reprinted with some cancelled passages. There is, in truth, nothing prejudicial either to the Catholic creed or to general morality in the 'Secchia Rapita.' We note, meanwhile, with interest, that it first saw the light at Paris, sharing thus the fortunes of the 'Adone,' which it preceded by one year. If the greatest living Italians at this time were exiles, it appears that the two most eminent poems of their literature first saw the light on foreign shores.

The 'Secchia Rapita' is the first example of heroico-comic poetry. Tassoni claims in print the honour of inventing this new species, and tells his friends that 'though he will not pique himself on being a poet, still he sets some store on having discovered a new kind of poem and occupied a vacant seat.' The seat—and it was no Siege Perilous—stood indeed empty and ready to be won by any free-lance of letters. Folengo had burlesqued romance. But no one as yet had made a parody of that which still existed mainly as the unaccomplished hope of literature. Trissino with his 'Italia

Liberata,' Tasso with his 'Gerusalemme Liberata,' tried to persuade themselves and the world that they had succeeded in delivering Italy in labour of an epic. But their maieutic ingenuity was vain. The nation carried no epic in her womb. Trissino's 'Italia' was a weazened changeling of erudition, and Tasso's 'Gerusalemme' a florid bastard of romance. Tassoni, noticing the imposition of these two eminent and worthy writers, determined to give his century an epic or heroic poem in the only form which then was possible. Briefly, he produced a caricature, modelled upon no existing work of modern art, but corresponding to the lineaments of that Desired of the Nation which pedants had prophesied. Unity of action, celestial machinery, races in conflict, contrasted heroes, the wavering chance of war, episodes, bards, heroines, and love subordinated to the martial motive—all these features of the epic he viewed through the distorting medium of his comic art.

In the days of the second Lombard League, when Frederick II. was fighting a losing battle with the Church, Guelf Bologna came into grim conflict with her Ghibelline neighbour Modena. The territory of these two cities formed the *champ clos* of a duel in which the forces of Germany and nearly all Italy took part; and in one engagement, at Fossalta, the Emperor's heir, King Enzo of Sardinia, was taken captive. How he passed the rest of his days, a prisoner of the Bolognese, and how he begat the semi-royal brood of Bentivogli, is matter of history and legend. During this conflict, memorable among the many municipal wars of Italy in the Middle Ages, it happened that some Modenese soldiers, who had pushed their way into the suburbs of Bologna, carried off a bucket and suspended it as a trophy in the bell-tower of their cathedral, where it may still be seen. One of the peculiarities of those medieval struggles—which roused the rivalry of towns separated from each other by a few miles of fertile country,

and which raged through generations till the real interests at issue were confounded in blind animosity of neighbour against neighbour—was the sense of humour and of sarcasm they encouraged. To hurl a dead donkey against your enemy's town-wall passed for a good joke, and discredited his honour more than the loss of a hundred fighting men in a pitched battle. Frontier fortresses received insulting names, like the Perugian *Becca di questo*, or like the Bolognese *Grevalcore*. There was much, in fact, in these Italian wars which reminds one of the hostilities between rival houses in a public school.

Such being the element of humour ready to hand in the annals of his country, Tassoni chose the episode of the Bolognese bucket for the theme of a mock-heroic epic. He made what had been an insignificant incident the real occasion of the war, and grouped the facts of history around it by ingenious distortions of the truth. The bucket is the Helen of his 'Iliad': [1]

> Vedrai, s' al cantar mio porgi l' orecchia,
> Elena trasformarsi in una secchia.

A mere trifle thus becomes a point of dispute capable of bringing gods, popes, emperors, kings, princes, cities, and whole nations into conflict. At the same time the satirist betrays his malice by departing as little as possible from the main current of actual events. History lends verisimilitude to the preposterous assumption that heaven and earth were drawn into a squabble about a bucket; and if there is any moral to be derived from the 'Secchia Rapita' we have it here. At the end of the contention, when both parties are exhausted, it is found that the person of a king weighs in the scale of nations no more than an empty bucket: [2]

> Riserbando ne' patti a i Modanesi
> La secchia, e 'l re de' Sardi ai Bolognesi.

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[1] Canto i. 2. [2] Canto xii. 77.

Such is the main subject of the 'Secchia Rapita;' and such is Tassoni's irony, an irony worthy of Aristophanes in its far-reaching indulgent contempt for human circumstance. But the poem has another object. It was written to punish Count Alessandro Brusantini. The leading episode, which occupies about three cantos of the twelve, is an elaborate vilification of this personal enemy travestied as the contemptible Conte di Culagna.

Tassoni's method of art corresponds to the irony of his inspiration. We find his originality in a peculiar blending of serious and burlesque styles, in abrupt but always well-contrived transitions from heroical magniloquence to plebeian farce and from scurrility to poetic elevation, finally in a frequent employment of the figure which the Greeks called *παρὰ προσδοκίαν*. His poem is a parody of the Aristophanic type. 'Like a fantastically ironical magic tree, the world-subversive idea which lies at the root of it springs up with blooming ornament of thoughts, with singing nightingales and climbing chattering apes.'[1] To seek a central motive or a sober meaning in this caprice of the satirical imagination would be idle. Tassoni had no intention, as some critics have pretended, to exhibit the folly of those party wars which tore the heart of Italy three centuries before his epoch, to teach the people of his day the miseries of foreign interference, or to strike a death-blow at classical mythology. The lesson which can be drawn from his cantos, that man in warfare disquiets himself in vain for naught, that a bucket is as good a *casus belli* as Helen, the moral which Southey pointed in his ballad of the Battle of Blenheim, emerges, not from the poet's design, but from the inevitable logic of his humour. Pique inspired the 'Secchia Rapita,' and in the despicable character of Count Culagna he fully revenged the

[1] So Heine wrote of Aristophanes. See my essay in *Studies of the Greek Poets*.

slight which had been put upon him. The revenge is savage certainly; for the Count remains 'immortally immerded' in the long-drawn episode which brought to view the shame of his domestic life. Yet while Tassoni drew blood, he never ceased to smile; and Count Culagna remains for us a personage of comedy rather than of satire.

In the next place, Tassoni meant to ridicule the poets of his time. He calls the 'Secchia Rapita' 'an absurd caprice, written to burlesque the modern poets.' His genius was nothing if not critical, and literature afforded him plenty of material for fun. Romance-writers with their jousts and duels and armed heroines, would-be epic poets with their extra-mundane machinery and pomp of phrase, Marino and his hyperbolical conceits, Tuscan purists bent on using only words of the Tre Cento, Petrarchisti spinning cobwebs of old metaphors and obsolete periphrases, all felt in turn the touch of his light lash. The homage paid to Petrarch's stuffed cat at Arquà supplied him with a truly Aristophanic gibe.[1] Society comes next beneath his ferrule. There is not a city of Italy which Tassoni did not wring in the withers of its self-conceit. The dialects of Ferrara, Bologna, Bergamo, Florence, Rome, lend the satirist vulgar phrases when he quits the grand style and, taking Virgil's golden trumpet from his lips, slides off into a *canaille* drawl or sluice of Billingsgate. Modena is burlesqued in her presiding Potta, gibbeted for her filthy streets. The Sienese discover that the world accounts them lunatics. The Florentines and Perugians are branded for notorious vice. Roman foppery, fantastical in feminine pretentiousness, serves as a foil to drag Culagna down into the ditch of ignominy. Here and there, Tassoni's satire is both venomous and pungent, as when he paints the dotage of the Empire, stabs Spanish pride of sovereignty, and menaces the Papacy with insurrection. But for the

[1] Canto viii. 33, 34.

most part, like Horace in the phrase of Persius, he plays about the vitals of the victims who admit him to their confidence—*admissus circum præcordia ludit.*

We can but regret that so clear-sighted, so urbane and so truly Aristophanic a satirist had not a wider field to work in. Seventeenth-century Italy was all too narrow for his genius; and if the 'Secchia Rapita' has lost its savour, this is less the poet's fault than the defect of his material. He was strong enough to have brought the Athens of Cleon, the France of Henri III., or the England of James I. within the range of his distorting truth-revealing mirror. Yet, even as it was, Tassoni opened several paths for modern humourists. Rabelais might have owned that caricature of Mars and Bacchus rioting in a tavern bed with Venus travestied as a boy, and in the morning, after breakfasting divinely on two hundred restorative eggs, escaping with the fear of a scandalised host and the police-court before their eyes. Yet Rabelais would hardly have brought this cynical picture of crude debauchery into so fine a contrast with the celestial environment of gods and goddesses. True to his principle of effect by alternation, Tassoni sometimes sketches the deities whom he derides, in the style of Volpato engravings after Guido. They move across his canvas with ethereal grace. What can be more charming than Diana visiting Endymion, and confessing to the Loves that all her past career as huntress and as chaste had been an error? Venus, too, when she takes that sensuously dreamy all-poetic journey across the blue Mediterranean to visit golden-haired King Enzo in his sleep, makes us forget her entrance into Modena disguised as a lad trained to play female parts upon the stage. This blending of true elegance with broad farce is a novelty in modern literature. We are reminded of the songs of the Mystæ on the meadows of Elysium in the 'Frogs.' Scarron and Voltaire through the French imitators of Tassoni, took

lessons from his caricature of Saturn, the old diseased senator, travelling in a sedan chair to the celestial parliament, with a clyster-pipe in front of him and his seat upon a close stool. Molière and Swift, votaries of Cloacina, were anticipated in the climax of Count Culagna's attempt to poison his wife, and in the invention of the enchanted ass so formidable by Parthian discharges on its adversary. Over these births of Tassoni's genius the Maccaronic Muse of Folengo and his Bolognese predecessors presided. There is something Lombard, a smack of sausage, in the humour. But it remained for the Modenese poet to bring this Mafelina into the comity of nations. We are not, indeed, bound to pay her homage. Yet when we find her inspiring such writers as Swift, Voltaire, Sterne and Heine, it is well to remember that Tassoni first evoked her from Mantuan gutters and the tripe-shops of Bologna.

'The fantastically ironical magic tree' of the 'Secchia Rapita' spread its green boughs not merely for chattering baboons. Nightingales sang there. The monkey-like Culagna, with his tricks and antics, disappears. Virtuous Renoppia, that wholesome country lass, the *bourgeois* counterpart of Bradamante, withholds her slipper from the poet's head when he is singing sad or lovely things of human fortune. Our eyes, rendered sensitive by vulgar sights, dwell with unwonted pleasure on the chivalrous beauty of King Enzo. Ernesto's death touches our sympathy with pathos, in spite of the innuendo cast upon his comrade Jaconìa. Paolo Malatesta rides with the shades of doom, the Dantesque cloud of love and destiny, around his forehead, through that motley mock-heroic band of burghers. Manfredi, consumed by an unholy passion for his sister, burns for one moment, like a face revealed by lightning, on our vision and is gone Finally, when the mood seizes him (for Tassoni persuades us into thinking he is but the creature of caprice), he tunes the

soft idyllic harp and sings Endymion's love-tale in strains soft as Marino's, sweet as Tasso's, outdoing Marino in delicacy, Tasso in reserve. This episode moved rigid Alfieri to admiration. It remains embedded in a burlesque poem, one of the most perfectly outlined triumphs of refined Italian romantic art. Yet such was the strength of the master's hand, so loyal was he to his principle of contrast, that he cuts the melodious idyll short with a twang of the guitar-strings, and strikes up a tavern ballad on Lucrezia. The irony which ruled his art demanded this inversion of proprieties. Cynthia wooing Endymion shows us woman in her frailty; Lucrece violated by Tarquin is woman in her dignity. The ironical poet had to adorn the first story with his choicest flowers of style and feeling, to burlesque the second with his grossest realism.

This antithesis between sustained poetry and melodiously worded slang, between radiant forms of beauty and grotesque ugliness, penetrates the 'Secchia Rapita' in every canto and in every detail. We pass from battle-scenes worthy of Ariosto and Tasso at their best into ditches of liquid dung. Ambassadors are introduced with touches that degrade them to the rank of *commis voyageurs*. Before the senate the same men utter orations in the style of Livy. The pomp of war is paraded, its machinery of catapults is put in motion, to discharge a dead ass into a besieged town; and when the beleaguered garrison behold it flying through the air, they do not take the donkey for a taunt, but for a heavenly portent. A tournament is held, and very brave in their attire are all the combatants. But according to its rules the greatest sluggard wins the crown of honour. Even in the similes, which formed so important an element of epic decoration, the same principle of contrast is maintained. Fine vignettes from nature in the style consecrated by Ariosto and Tasso introduce ludicrous incidents. Vulgar details

picked up from the streets prepare us for touches of pathos or poetry.

Tassoni takes high rank as a literary artist for the firmness with which he adhered to his principle of irony, and for the facility of vigour which conceals all traces of effort in so difficult a task. I may be thought to have pitched his praise too high. But those will forgive me who enjoy the play of pure sharp-witted fancy, or who reflect upon the sadness of the theme which occupies my pen in these two volumes.

Of the four poets to whom this chapter is devoted, Guarini, Marino, and Tassoni were successful, Chiabrera was a respectable failure. The reason of this difference is apparent. In the then conditions of Italian society, at the close of a great and glorious period of varied culture, beneath the shadow of a score of Spaniardising princelings, with the spies of the Inquisition at every corner, and the drill of the Tridentine Council to be gone through under Jesuitical direction, there was no place for a second Pindar. But there was scope for decorative art, for sensuous indulgence, and for genial irony. Happy the man who paced his vineyards, dreaming musically of Arcadia! Happy the man who rolled in Circe's pigstye! Happy the man who sat in his study and laughed Therefore the most meritorious productions of the time, Boccalini s 'Ragguagli di Parnaso,' Bracciolini's 'Scherno degli Dei,' have a touch of Tassoni's humour in them; while Achillini and Preti limp somewhat feebly after Marino's Alcibidean swagger, and endless pastorals pullulate from Guarini's tragicomedy. We need not occupy our minds with these secondary writers, nor do more than indicate the scholarly niceness with which Filicaja in the second half of the seventeenth century continued Chiabrera's tradition. But one word must be said in honour of Fulvio Testi, the Modenese poet and statesman, who paid for the fame of a Canzone with his head. He has a double interest for us: first, because Leopardi esteemed him

the noblest of Italian lyrists after Petrarch; secondly, because his fate proved that Tasso's dread of assassination was not wholly an illusion. Reading the ode addressed to Count Raimondo Montecuccoli 'Ruscelletto orgoglioso,' the ode which brought Testi to the block in a dungeon of the Estensi, we comprehend what Leopardi meant by his high panegyric. It is a piece of poetry, lofty in style, grave in movement, pregnant with weighty thought, stern and rugged, steeped in a sublimity of gloom and Stoicism which remind us of the author of 'La Ginestra.' The century produced little that bore a stamp so evident of dignity and greatness.

CHAPTER XII

PALESTRINA AND THE ORIGINS OF MODERN MUSIC

Italy in Renaissance produces no National School of Music—Flemish Composers in Rome—Singers and Orchestra—The Chaotic Indecency of this Contrapuntal Style—Palestrina's Birth and Early History—Decrees of the Tridentine Council upon Church Music—The Mass of Pope Marcello—Palestrina satisfies the Cardinals with his New Style of Sacred Music—Pius IV. and his Partiality for Music—Palestrina and Filippo Neri—His Motetts—The 'Song of Solomon' set to Melody—Palestrina, the Saviour of Music—The Founder of the Modern Style—Florentine Essays in the Oratorio.

It is a singular fact that while Italy led all the European races in scholarship and literature, in the arts of sculpture and painting, in commerce and the sciences of life, she had developed no national school of music in the middle of the sixteenth century. Native melody might indeed be heard in abundance along her shores and hillsides, in city streets and on the squares where men and girls danced together at evening. But such melody was popular; it could not be called artistic or scientific. The music which resounded through the Sistine Chapel, beneath the Prophets of Michelangelo, on high days and festivals, was not Italian. The composers of it came for the most part from Flemish or French provinces, bearing the names of Josquin Desprès, of Andrew Willaert, of Eleazar Genet, of James Arkadelt, of Claude Goudimel; and the performers were in like manner chiefly ultramontanes. Julius II. in 1513 founded a chapel in the Vatican Basilica called the Cappella Giulia for the maintenance of twelve male singers, twelve boys, and two masters of the choristers. In doing so it was his object to

encourage a Roman school of music and to free the Chapter of S. Peter's from the inconvenience of being forced to engage foreign choir-men. His scheme, however, had been only partially successful. As late as 1540, we find that the principal composers and musicians in Rome were still foreigners. To three Italians of repute, there were five Flemings, three Frenchmen, three Spaniards, one German, and one Portuguese.[1]

The Flemish style of contrapuntal or figured harmony, which had enchanted Europe by its novelty and grace when Josquin Desprès, in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, brought it into universal vogue, was still dominant in Italy. But this style already showed unmistakable signs of decadence and dissolution. It had become unfit for ecclesiastical uses, and by the exaggeration of its qualities it was tending to anarchy. The grand defect of Flemish music, considered as an art of expression, was that it ignored propriety and neglected the libretto. Instead of exercising original invention, instead of suiting melodies to words by appropriate combinations of sound and sense, the composers chose any musical themes that came to hand, and wrought them up into elaborate contrapuntal structures without regard for their book. The first words of a passage from the Creed, for instance, were briefly indicated at the outset of the number: what followed was but a reiteration of the same syllables, and divided in the most arbitrary manner to suit the complicated descant which they had to serve. The singers could not adapt their melodic phrases to the liturgical text, since sometimes passages of considerable length fell upon a couple of syllables, while on the contrary a long sentence might have no more than a bar or even less assigned to it. They were consequently in the habit of drawling out or gabbling over the words, regardless of both sense and sentiment. Nor was this

[1] See Baini, *Life of Palestrina*, vol. ii. p. 20.

all. The composers of the Flemish school prided themselves on overloading their work with every kind of intricate and difficult ornament, exhibiting their dexterity by canons of many types, inversions, imitations, contrapuntal devices of divers ingenious and distracting species. The verbal theme became a mere basis for the utterance of scientific artifices and the display of vocal gymnastics. The singers, for their part, were allowed innumerable licenses. While the bass sustained the melody, the other voices indulged in extempore descant (*composizione alla mente*) and in extravagances of technical execution (*rifiorimenti*), regardless of the style of the main composition, violating time, and setting even the fundamental tone at defiance.

The composers, to advance another step in the analysis of this strange medley, took particular delight in combining different sets of words, melodies of widely diverse character, antagonistic rhythms, and divergent systems of accentuation in a single piece. They assigned these several ingredients to several parts; and for the further exhibition of their perverse skill, went even to the length of coupling themes in the major and the minor.

The most obvious result of such practice was that it became impossible to understand what words were being sung, and that instead of concord and order in the choir, a confused discord and anarchy of dinning sounds prevailed. What made the matter from an ecclesiastical point of view still worse, was that these scholastically artificial compositions were frequently based on trivial and vulgar tunes, suggesting the tavern, the dancing-room, or even worse places, to worshippers assembled for the celebration of a Sacrament. Masses bore titles adopted from the popular melodies on which they were founded; such, for example, as 'Adieu, mes amours,' 'A l'ombre d'un buissonnet,' 'Baise-moi,' 'L'ami baudichon madame,' 'Le vilain jaloux.' Even

the words of love-ditties and obscene ballads in French, Flemish, and Italian, were being squalled out by the tenor while the bass gave utterance to an 'Agnus' or a 'Benedictus,' and the soprano was engaged upon the verses of a Latin hymn. Baini, who examined hundreds of these Masses and motetts in MS., says that the words imported into them from vulgar sources 'make one's flesh creep and one's hair stand on end.' He does not venture to do more than indicate a few of the more decent of these interloping verses; but mentions one 'Kyrie,' in which the tenor sang 'Je ne vis oncques la pareille;' a 'Sanctus,' in which he had to utter 'gracieuse gente mounyere;' and a 'Benedictus,' where the same offender was employed on 'Madame, faites moy sçavoir.' As an augmentation of this indecency, numbers from a Mass or motett which started with the grave rhythm of a Gregorian tone, were brought to their conclusion on the dance measure of a popular *ballata*, so that 'Incarnatus est' or 'Kyrie eleison' went jigging off into suggestions of Masetto and Zerlina at a village ball.

To describe all the impertinences to which the customs of vocal execution then in vogue gave rise, by means of flourishes, improvisations, accelerations of time, and multitudinous artifices derived from the *ad libitum* abuses of the fugal machinery, would serve no purpose. But it may be profitably mentioned that the mischief was not confined to the vocal parts. Organ and orchestra of divers instruments were allowed the same liberty of improvising on the given theme, embroidering these with fanciful *capricci*, and indulging their own taste in symphonies connected with the main structure by slight and artificial links. Instrumental music had not yet taken an independent place in art. The lute, the trumpet, or the stops of the organ, followed and imitated the voice; and thus in this confusion a choir of stringed and wind instruments was placed in competition

with the singing choir.[1] It would appear that the composer frequently gave but a ground-sketch of his plan, without troubling himself to distribute written parts to the executants. The efflorescences, excursuses and episodes to which I have alluded, were supplied by artists whom long training in this kind of music enabled to perform their separate sallies and to execute their several antics within certain limits of recognised license. But since each vied with the other to produce striking effects, the choir rivalling the orchestra, the tenor competing with the bass, the organ with the viol, it followed that the din of their accumulated efforts was not unjustly compared to that made by a 'stye of grunting pigs,' the builders of the Tower of Babel, or the 'squalling of cats in January.'[2] 'All their happiness,' writes a contemporary critic, 'consisted in keeping the bass singer to the fugue, while at the same time one voice was shouting out "Sanctus," another "Sabaoth," a third "gloria tua," with howlings, bellowings and squealings that cannot be described.'

It must not be thought that this almost unimaginable state of things indicated a defect either of intellectual capacity or of artistic skill. It was due rather to the abuse of science and of virtuosity, both of which had attained to a high degree of development. It manifested the decadence of music in its immaturity, through over-confident employment of exuberant resources on an end inadequate for the fulfilment of the art. Music, it must be remembered, unlike literature and plastic art, had no antique tradition to assimilate, no masterpieces of accomplished form to study. In the modern world it was an art without connecting links

[1] While the choir was singing, the orchestra was playing concerted pieces called *ricercari*, in which the vocal parts were reproduced.

[2] See the original passages from contemporary writers quoted by Baini, vol. i. pp. 102–104. Savonarola went so far as to affirm: 'Che questo canto figurato l' ha trovato Satanasso,' a phrase quite in the style of a Puritan abusing choirs and organs.

to bind it to the past. And this circumstance rendered it liable to negligent treatment by a society that prided itself upon the recovery of the classics. The cultivated classes abandoned it in practice to popular creators of melody upon the one hand, and to grotesque scholastic pedants on the other. And from the blending of those ill-accorded elements arose the chaos which I have attempted to describe.

Learned composers in the style developed by the Flemish masters had grown tired of writing simple music for four voices and a single choir. They revelled in the opportunity of combining eight vocal parts and bringing three choirs with accompanying orchestras into play at the same time. They were proud of proving how by counterpoint the most dissimilar and mutually-jarring factors could be wrought into a whole, intelligible to the scientific musician, though unedifying to the public. In the neglect of their art, considered as an art of interpretation and expression, they abandoned themselves to intricate problems and to the presentation of incongruous complexities.

The singers were expert in rendering difficult passages, in developing unpromising motives, and in embroidering the arras-work of the composer with fanciful extravagances of vocal execution. The instrumentalists were trained in the art of copying effects of fugue or madrigal by lutes and viols in concerted pieces. The people were used to dance and sing and touch the mandoline together; in every house were found amateurs who could with voice and string produce the studied compositions of the masters.

What was really lacking, amid this exuberance of musical resources, in this thick jungle of technical facilities, was a controlling element of correct taste, a right sense of the proper function of music as an interpretative art. On the very threshold of its modern development, music had fallen into early decay owing to the misapplication of the means so

copiously provided by nature and by exercise. A man of genius and of substantial intuition into the real ends of vocal music was demanded at this moment, who should guide the art into its destined channel. And in order to elicit such a creator of new impulses, such a Nomothetes of the disordered state, it was requisite that external pressure should be brought to bear upon the art. An initiator of the right calibre was found in Palestrina. The pressure from without was supplied by the Council of Trent.

It may here be parenthetically remarked that music, all through modern history, has needed such legislators and initiators of new methods. Considered as an art of expression, she has always tended to elude control, to create for herself a domain extraneous to her proper function, and to erect her resources of mere sound into self-sufficingness. What Palestrina effected in the sixteenth century, was afterwards accomplished on a wider platform by Gluck in the eighteenth, and in our own days the same deliverance has been attempted by Wagner. The efforts of all these epoch-making musicians have been directed toward restraining the tendencies of music to assert an independence, which for herself becomes the source of weakness by reducing her to co-operation with insignificant words, and which renders her subservient to merely technical dexterities.

Giovanni Pier Luigi, called Palestrina from his birthplace in one of the Colonna fiefs near Rome, the ancient Præneste, was born of poor parents, in the year 1524. He went to Rome about 1540, and began his musical career probably as a choir-boy in one of the Basilicas. Claude Goudimel, the Besançon composer, who subsequently met a tragic death at Lyons in a massacre of Huguenots, had opened a school of harmony in Rome, where Palestrina learned the first rudiments of that science. What Palestrina owed to Goudimel, is not clear. But we have the right to assume that the

Protestant part-songs of the French people which Goudimel transferred to the hymn-books of the Huguenots, had a potent influence upon the formation of his style. They may have been for him what the Chorales of Germany were for the school of Bach.[1] Externally, Palestrina's life was a very uneventful one, and the records collected with indefatigable diligence by his biographer have only brought to light changes from one post to another in several Basilicas, and unceasing industry in composition. The vast number of works published by Palestrina in his lifetime, or left in MS. at his death, or known to have been written and now lost, would be truly astonishing were it not a fact that very eminent creative genius is always copious, and in no province of the arts more fertile than in that of music. Palestrina lived and died a poor man. In his dedications he occasionally remarks with sober pathos on the difficulty of pursuing scientific studies in the midst of domestic anxiety. His pay was very small, and the expense of publishing his works, which does not seem to have been defrayed by patrons, was at that time very great. Yet he enjoyed an uncontested reputation as the first of living composers, the saviour of Church music, the creator of a new style; and on his tomb, in 1594, was inscribed this title: *Princeps Musicæ*.

The state of confusion into which ecclesiastical music had fallen, rendered it inevitable that some notice of so grave a scandal should be taken by the Fathers of the Tridentine Council in their deliberations on reform of ritual. It appears, therefore, that in their twenty-second session (September 17, 1562) they enjoined upon the Ordinaries to 'exclude from churches all such music as, whether through the organ or the singing, introduces anything of impure or lascivious, in order that the house of God may truly be seen to be and may

[1] See Michelet, *Histoire de France*, vol. xi. pp. 76, 101; vol. xii. p. 383 (Paris: Lacroix, 1877).

be called the house of prayer.' [1] In order to give effect to this decree of the Tridentine Council, Pius IV. appointed a congregation of eight Cardinals upon August 2, 1564, among whom three deserve especial mention—Michele Ghislieri, the Inquisitor, who was afterwards Pope Pius V.; Carlo Borromeo, the sainted Archbishop of Milan; and Vitellozzo Vitellozzi. It was their business, among other matters of reform, to see that the Church music of Rome was instantly reduced to proper order in accordance with the decree of the Council. Carlo Borromeo was nephew and chief minister of the reigning Pope. Vitellozzo Vitellozzi was a young man of thirty-three years, who possessed a singular passion for music. To these two members of the congregation, as a sub-committee, was deputed the special task of settling the question of ecclesiastical music, it being stipulated that they should by all means see that sufficient clearness were introduced into the enunciation of the liturgical words by the singers.

I will here interrupt the thread of the narration, in order to touch upon the legendary story which connects Palestrina incorrectly with what subsequently happened. It was well known that on the decisions of the sub-committee of the congregation hung the fate of Church music. For some while it seemed as though music might be altogether expelled from the rites of the Catholic Ecclesia. And it soon became matter of history that Palestrina had won the cause of his art, had maintained it in its eminent position in the ritual of Rome, and at the same time had opened a new period in the development of modern music by the production of his Mass called the 'Mass of Pope Marcellus' at this critical moment. These things were true; and when the peril had been overpassed, and the actual circumstances of the salvation and revolution of Church music had been forgotten, the memory

[1] Baini, i. p. 196.

of the crisis and the title of the victorious Mass remained to form a mythus. The story ran that the good Pope Marcellus, who occupied the Holy See for only twenty-two days, in the year 1555, determined on the abolition of all music but Plain Song in the Church; hearing of which resolve, Palestrina besought him to suspend his decree until he had himself produced and presented a Mass conformable to ecclesiastical propriety. Marcello granted the chapel-master this request; and on Easter Day, the Mass, which saved Church music from destruction, was performed with the Papal approval and the applause of Rome. It is not necessary to point out the many impossibilities and contradictions involved in this legend, since the real history of the Mass which wrought salvation for Church music, lies before us plainly written in the prolix pages of Baini. Yet it would have vexed me to pass by in silence so interesting and instructive an example of the mode by which the truth of history is veiled in legend.

Truth is always more interesting than fiction, and the facts of this important episode in musical history are not without their element of romance. There is no doubt that there was a powerful party in the Catholic Church imbued with a stern ascetic or puritanical spirit, who would gladly have excluded all but Plain Song from her services. Had Michele Ghislieri instead of the somewhat worldly Angelo de' Medici been on the Papal throne, or had the decision of the musical difficulty been delegated to him by the congregation of eight Cardinals in 1564, Palestrina might not have obtained that opportunity of which he so triumphantly availed himself. But it happened that the reigning Pope was a lover of the art, and had a special reason for being almost superstitiously indulgent to its professors. While he was yet a Cardinal, in the easy-going days of Julius III., Angelo de' Medici had been invited with other princes of the Church to

hear the marvellous performances upon the lute and the incomparable improvisations of a boy called Silvio Antoniano. The meeting took place at a banquet in the palace of the Venetian Cardinal Pisani. When the guests were assembled, the Cardinal Rannuccio Farnese put together a bouquet of flowers, and presenting these to the musician, bade him give them to that one of the Cardinals who should one day be chosen Pope. Silvio without hesitation handed the flowers to Angelo de' Medici, and taking up his lute began to sing his praises in impassioned extempore verse. After his election to the Papacy, with the title of Pius IV., Angelo de' Medici took Silvio into his service, and employed him in such honourable offices that the fortunate youth was finally advanced to the dignity of Cardinal under the reign of Clement VIII. in 1598.[1]

It was therefore necessary for the congregation of musical reform to take the Pope's partiality for this art into consideration; and they showed their good will by choosing his own nephew, together with a notorious amateur of music, for their sub-committee. The two Cardinals applied to the College of Pontifical Singers for advice; and these deputed eight of their number—three Spaniards, one Fleming, and four Italians—to act as assistants in the coming deliberations. It was soon agreed that Masses and motetts in which different verbal themes were jumbled, should be prohibited; that musical motives taken from profane songs should be abandoned; and that no countenance should be given to compositions or words invented by contemporary poets. These three conditions were probably laid down as indispensable by the Cardinals in office before proceeding to the more difficult question of securing a plain and intelligible enunciation of the sacred text. When the Cardinals demanded this as the

[1] It will be remembered that this Silvio Antoniano was one of the revisers of Tasso's poem, and the one who gave him most trouble.

essential point in the proposed reform, the singers replied that it would be impossible in practice. They were so used to the complicated structure of figured music, with its canons, fugal intricacies, imitations and inversions, that they could not even imagine a music that should be simple and straightforward, retaining the essential features of vocal harmony, and yet allowing the words on which it was composed to be distinctly heard. The Cardinals rebutted these objections by pointing to the 'Te Deum' of Costanzo Festa (a piece which has been always sung on the election of a new Pope from that day to our own times) and to the 'Improperia' of Palestrina, which also holds its own in the service of the Sistine. But the singers answered that these were exceptional pieces, which, though they might fulfil the requirements of the Congregation of Reform, could not be taken as the sole models for compositions involving such variety and length of execution as the Mass. Their answer proved conclusively to what extent the contrapuntal style had dissociated itself from the right object of all vocal music, that of interpreting, enforcing, and transfiguring the words with which it deals, and how it had become a mere art for the scientific development of irrelevant and often impertinent melodic themes.

In order to avoid an absolute deadlock, which might have resulted in the sacrifice of ecclesiastical harmony, and have inflicted a death-blow on modern music, the committee agreed to refer their difficulties to Palestrina. On the principle of *solvitur ambulando*, he was invited to study the problem, and to produce a trial piece which should satisfy the conditions exacted by the Congregation as well as the requirements of the artists. Literally, he received commission to write a Mass in sober ecclesiastical style, free from all impure and light suggestions in the themes, the melodies and the rhythms, which should allow the sacred words in their full sense to be distinctly heard, without sacrificing vocal harmony and the

customary interlacing of fugued passages. If he succeeded, the Cardinals promised to make no further innovation ; but if he failed, Carlo Borromeo warned him that the Congregation of Reform would disband the choral establishments of the Pontifical Chapel and the Roman churches, and prohibit the figured style in vogue, in pursuance of the clear decision of the Tridentine Council.

This was a task of Hercules imposed on Palestrina. The art to which he had devoted his lifetime, the fame which he had acquired as a composer, the profession by which he and all his colleagues gained their daily bread, depended on his working out the problem. He was practically commanded to discover a new species of Church music, or to behold the ruin of himself and his companions, the extinction of the art and science he so passionately loved. Truly may his biographer remark : ' I am deliberately of opinion that no artist either before or since has ever found himself in a parallel strait.'

We have no exact record of the spirit in which he approached this labour.[1] But he was a man of sincere piety, a great and enthusiastic servant of art. The command he had received came from a quarter which at that period and in Rome had almost divine authority. He knew that music hung trembling in the balance upon his failure or success. And these two motives, the motive of religious zeal and the motive of devotion to art, inspired him for the creation of a new musical world. Analysis of his work and comparison

[1] In the Dedication of the *Mass of Pope Marcello* to Philip II. in 1567 Palestrina only says that he had been constrained by the order of men of the highest gravity and most approved piety to apply himself *ad sanctissimum Missæ sacrificium novo modorum genere decorandum*, and that he had performed his task with indefatigable pains and industry (Baini, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 280). But it is noteworthy that of the three Masses furnished for the approval of the congregation, the first was entitled *Illumina oculos meos*, and that an anecdote referring to this title relates Palestrina's earnest prayers for grace and inspiration during the execution of the work (*ibid.* p. 223, note).

of it with the style which he was called on to supersede, show pretty clearly what were the principles that governed him. With a view to securing the main object of rendering the text intelligible to the faithful, he had to dispense with the complicated Flemish system of combined melodies in counterpoint, and to employ his scientific resources of fugue and canon with parsimony, so that in future they should subserve and not tyrannise over expression. He determined to write for six voices, two of which should be bass, in order that the fundamental themes should be sustained with dignity and continuity. But what he had principally in view, what in fact he had been called on to initiate, was that novel adaptation of melody and science to verbal phrase and sense, whereby music should be made an art interpretative of religious sentiment, powerful to clothe each shade of meaning in the text with appropriate and beautiful sound, instead of remaining a merely artificial and mechanical structure of sounds disconnected from the words employed in giving them vocal utterance.

Palestrina set to work, and composed three Masses, which were performed upon April 28, 1565, before the eight Cardinals of the congregation in the palace of Cardinal Vitellozzi. All three were approved of; but the first two still left something to be desired. Baini reports that they preserved somewhat too much of the cumbrous Flemish manner; and that though the words were more intelligible, the fugal artifices overlaid their clear enunciation. In the third, however, it was unanimously agreed that Palestrina had solved the problem satisfactorily. 'Its style is always equal, always noble, always alive, always full of thought and sincere feeling, rising and ascending to the climax; not to understand the words would be impossible; the melodies combine to stimulate devotion; the harmonies touch the heart; it delights without distracting; satisfies desire without tickling the senses; it is beautiful in

all the beauties of the sanctuary.' So writes Palestrina's enthusiastic biographer; so apparently thought the Cardinals of the congregation; and when this Mass (called the 'Mass of Pope Marcello,' out of grateful tribute to the Pontiff, whose untimely death had extinguished many sanguine expectations) was given to the world, the whole of Italy welcomed it with a burst of passionate applause. Church music had been saved. Modern music had been created. A new and lovely form of art had arisen like a star.

It was not enough that the 'Mass of Pope Marcello' should have satisfied the congregation. It had next to receive the approval of the Pope, who heard it on June 19. On this occasion, if the Court Chronicle be correct, Pius made a pretty speech, declaring that 'of such nature must have been the harmonies of the new song heard by John the Apostle in the heavenly Jerusalem, and that another John had given us a taste of them in the Jerusalem of the Church Militant.' He seems, indeed, to have been convinced that the main problem of preserving clearness of enunciation in the uttered words had been solved, and that there was now no reason to deprive the faithful of the artistic and devotional value of melodious music. He consequently appointed Palestrina to the post of composer for the Papal Chapel, and created a monopoly for the performance of his works. This measure, which roused considerable jealousy among musicians at the moment, had the salutary effect of rendering the new style permanent in usage.

Of Palestrina's voluminous compositions this is not the place to speak. It is enough to have indicated the decisive part which he took in the reformation of Church music at a moment when its very existence was imperilled, and to have described the principles upon which he laid down new laws for the art. I must not, however, omit to dwell upon his subsequent connexion with S. Filippo Neri, since the music

he composed for the Oratory of that saint contributed much toward the creation of a semi-lyrical and semi-dramatic style to which we may refer the origins of the modern Oratorio. Filippo Neri was the spiritual director of Palestrina, and appointed him composer to his devout confraternity. For the use of that society the master wrote a series of *Arie Divote* on Italian words. They were meant to be sung by the members, and to supersede the old usages of Laud-music, which had chiefly consisted in adapting popular street-tunes to sacred words.[1]

To the same connexion with the Oratory we owe one of the most remarkable series of Palestrina's compositions. These were written upon the words of an Italian Canzone in thirty octave stanzas, addressed as a prayer to the Virgin. Palestrina set each stanza, after the fashion of a Madrigal, to different melodies; and the whole work proved a manual of devotional music, in the purest artistic taste, and the most delicately sentimental key of feeling. Together with this collection of spiritual songs should be mentioned Palestrina's setting of passages from the 'Song of Solomon' in a series of motetts, which were dedicated to Gregory XIII. in 1584. They had an enormous success. Ten editions between that date and 1650 were poured out from the presses of Rome and Venice, to satisfy the impatience of thousands who desired to feed upon 'the nectar of their sweetness.' Palestrina chose for the motives of his compositions such voluptuous phrases of the Vulgate as the following: *Fasciculus myrrhæ dilectus meus mihi. Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis, quia amore langueo. Vulnerasti cor meum, soror, sponsa mea.* This was the period when Italy was ringing with the secular sweetnesses of Tasso's 'Aminta' and of Guarini's 'Pastor Fido;' when the devotion of the cloister was becoming languorous and soft; when the cult of the Virgin was assuming

[1] See Vol. IV. *Italian Literature* Part I, pp. 226–227, 265–266.

the extravagant proportions satirised by Pascal; finally, when manners were affecting a tone of swooning piety blent with sensuous luxuriousness. Palestrina's setting of the 'Canticle' and of the 'Hymn to Mary' provided the public with music which, according to the taste of that epoch, transferred terrestrial emotions into the regions of paradisal bliss, and justified the definition of music as the *Lamento dell' amore o la preghiera agli dei.* The great creator of a new ecclesiastical style, the 'imitator of nature,' as Vincenzo Galileo styled him, the 'prince of music,' as his epitaph proclaimed him, lent his genius to an art, vacillating between mundane sensuality and celestial rapture, which, however innocently developed by him in the sphere of music, was symptomatic of the most unhealthy tendencies of his race and age. While singing these madrigals and these motetts the youth of either sex were no longer reminded, it is true, of tavern ditties or dance measures. But the emotions of luxurious delight or passionate ecstasy deep in their own natures were drawn forth and sanctified by application to the language of effeminate devotion.

I have dwelt upon these two sets of compositions, rather than upon the masses of strictly and severely ecclesiastical music which Palestrina produced with inexhaustible industry, partly because they appear to have been extraordinarily popular, and partly because they illustrate those tendencies in art and manners which the sentimental school of Bolognese painters attempted to embody. They belong to that religious sphere which the Jesuit Order occupied, governed, and administered upon the lines of their prescribed discipline. These considerations are not merely irrelevant. The specific qualities of Italian music for the next two centuries were undoubtedly determined by the atmosphere of sensuous pietism in which it flourished, at the very time when German music was striking far other roots in the Chorales of the Reforma-

tion epoch. What Palestrina effected was to substitute in Church music the clear and melodious manner of the secular madrigal for the heavy and scholastic science of the Flemish school, and to produce masterpieces of religious art in his motetts on the Canticles which confounded the lines of demarcation between pious and profane expression. He taught music to utter the emotions of the heart; but those emotions in his land and race were already tending in religion toward the sentimental and voluptuous.

There is no doubt that the peril to which music was exposed at the time of the Tridentine Council was a serious and real one. When we remember how intimate was the connexion between the higher kinds of music and the ritual of the Church, this will be apparent. Nor is it too much to affirm that the art at that crisis, but for the favour shown to it by Pius IV. and for Palestrina's intervention, might have been well-nigh extinguished in Italy. How fatal the results would then have been for the development of modern music, can be estimated by considering the decisive part played by the Italians in the formation of musical style from the end of the sixteenth century onwards to the age of Gluck, Handel, Haydn and Mozart. Had the music of the Church in Italy been confined at that epoch to Plain Song, as the Congregation of Reform threatened, the great Italian school of vocalisation would not have been founded, the Conservatories of Naples and the Scuole of Venice would have been silent, and the style upon which, dating from Palestrina's inventions, the evolution of all species of the art proceeded, would have passed into oblivion.

That this proposition is not extravagant, the history of music in England will suffice to prove. Before the victory of Puritan principles in Church and State, the English were well abreast of other races in this art. During the sixteenth century, Tallis, Byrd, Morley, Wilbye, Dowland and Orlando

Gibbons could hold their own against Italian masters. The musical establishments of cathedrals, royal and collegiate chapels, and noble houses were nurseries for artists. Every English home, in that age, like every German home in the eighteenth century, abounded in amateurs who were capable of performing part-songs and concerted pieces on the lute and viol with correctness. Under the *régime* of the Commonwealth this national growth of music received a check from which it never afterwards recovered. Though the seventeenth century witnessed the rising of one eminent composer, Purcell; though the eighteenth was adorned with meritorious writers of the stamp of Blow and Boyce; yet it is obvious that the art remained among us unprogressive, at a time when it was making gigantic strides in Italy and Germany. It is always dangerous to attribute the decline of art in a nation to any one cause. Yet I think it can scarcely be contested that the change of manners and of temperament wrought in England by the prevalence of Puritan opinion, had much to answer for in this premature decay of music. We may therefore fairly argue that if the gloomy passion of intolerant fanaticism which burned in men like Caraffa and Ghislieri had prevailed in Italy—a passion analogous in its exclusiveness to Puritanism—or if no composer, in the place of Palestrina, had satisfied the requirements of the Council and the congregation, the history of music in Italy and Europe to uswards would have been far different.

These considerations are adduced to justify the importance attached by me to the episode of which Palestrina was the hero. Yet it should not be forgotten that other influences were at work at the same time in Italy, which greatly stimulated the advance of music. If space permitted, it would be interesting to enlarge upon the work of Luca Marenzio, the prince of madrigal-writers, and on the services rendered by Vincenzo Galileo, father of the greatest man of science in his

age, in placing the practice of stringed instruments on a sound basis. It should also be remembered that in the society of Filippo Neri at Rome, the Oratorio was taking shape, and emerging from the simple elements of the Spiritual Laud and *Aria Divota*. This form, however, would certainly have perished if the austere party in the Church had prevailed against the lenient for the exclusion of figured music from religious exercises.

There was, moreover, an interesting contemporary movement at Florence, which deserves some detailed mention. A private academy of amateurs and artists formed itself for the avowed purpose of reviving the musical declamation of the Greeks. As the new ecclesiastical style created by Palestrina grew out of the Counter-Reformation embodied in the decrees of the Tridentine Council, so this movement, which eventually resulted in the Opera, attached itself to the earlier enthusiasms of the Classical Revival. The humanists had restored Latin poetry; the architects had perfected a neo-Latin manner; sculptors and painters had profited by the study of antique fragments, and had reproduced the bas-reliefs and arabesques of Roman palaces. It was now, much later in the day, the turn of the musicians to make a similar attempt. Their quest was vague and visionary. Nothing remained of Greek or Roman music. To guide these explorers, there was only a dim instinct that the ancients had declaimed dramatic verse with musical intonation. But, as the alchemists sought the philosopher's stone, and founded modern chemistry; as, according to an ancient proverb, they who search for silver find gold; so it happened that, from the pedantic and ill-directed attempts of this academy proceeded the system on which the modern Oratorio and Opera were based. What is noticeable in these experiments is, that a new form of musical expression, declamatory and continuous, therefore dramatic, as opposed to the lyrical and fugal methods of the contra-

puntists, was in process of elaboration. Claudio Monteverde, who may be termed the pioneer of *recitativo*, in his opera of 'Orfeo;' Giacomo Carissimi, in whose 'Jephtha' the form of the Oratorio is already outlined, were the most eminent masters of the school which took its origin in the Florentine Academy of the Palazzo Vernio.

To pursue the subject further, would be to transgress the chronological limits of my theme. It is enough to have attempted in this chapter to show how the destinies of Italian music were secured and its species determined in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. How that art at its climax in the eighteenth century affected the manners, penetrated the whole life, and influenced the literature of the Italians, may be read in an English work of singular ability and originality.[1]

[1] *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, by Vernon Lee.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BOLOGNESE SCHOOL OF PAINTERS

Decline of Plastic Art—Dates of the Eclectic Masters—The Mannerists—Baroccio—Reaction started by Lodovico Caracci—His Cousins Annibale and Agostino—Their Studies—Their Academy at Bologna—Their Artistic Aims—Dionysius Calvaert—Guido Reni—The Man and his Art—Domenichino—Ruskin's Criticism—Relation of Domenichino to the Piety of his Age—Caravaggio and the Realists—Ribera—Lo Spagna—Guercino—His Qualities as Colourist—His Terribleness—Private Life—Digression upon Criticism—Reasons why the Bolognese Painters are justly now Neglected.

After tracing the origin of modern music at its fountain head in Palestrina, it requires some courage to approach the plastic arts at this same epoch.

Music was the last real manifestation of the creative genius in Italy. Rarefied to evanescent currents of emotional and sensuous out-breathings, the spirit of the race exhaled itself in song from human throats, in melody on lute and viol, until the whole of Europe thrilled with the marvel and the mystery of this new language of the soul. Music was the fittest utterance for the Italians of the Counter-Reformation period. Debarred from political activity, denied the liberty of thought and speech, that gifted people found an inarticulate vehicle of expression in tone: tone which conveys all meanings to the nerves that feel, advances nothing to the mind that reasons, says everything without formulating a proposition.

Only a sense of duty to my subject, which demands completion, makes me treat of painting in the last years of the sixteenth century. The great Italian cycle, rounded by

Lionardo, Raffaello, Michelangelo, Correggio and Tiziano, was being closed at Venice by Tintoretto. After him invention ceased. But there arose at Bologna a school, bent on resuscitating the traditions of an art which had already done its utmost to interpret mind to mind through mediums of lovely form and colour. The founders of the Bolognese Academy, like Medea operating on decrepit Æson, chopped up the limbs of painting which had ceased to throb with organic life, recombined them by an act of intellect and will, and having pieced them together, set the composite machine in motion on the path of studied method. Their aim was analogous to that of the Church in its reconstitution of Catholicism; and they succeeded in so far as they achieved a partial success, through the inspiration which the Catholic Revival gave them. These painters are known as the Eclectics, and this title sufficiently indicates their effort to revive art by recomposing what lay before them in disintegrated fragments. They did not explore new territory or invent fresh vehicles of expression. They sought to select the best points of Græco-Roman and Italian style, unconscious that the physical type of the Niobids, the voluptuous charm of Correggio, the luminous colour of Titian, the terribleness of Michelangelo, and the serenity of Raphael, being the ultimate expressions of distinct artistic qualities, were incompatible. A still deeper truth escaped their notice—namely, that art is valueless unless the artist has something intensely felt to say, and that where this intensity of feeling exists, it finds for itself its own specific and inevitable form.

> Poems distilled from other poems pass away,
> The swarms of reflectors and the polite pass, and leave ashes;
> Admirers, importers, obedient persons, make but the soil of literature.

These profound sentences are the epitaph, not only of imitative poetry, but also of such eclectic art as the Caracci

instituted. Very little of it bears examination now. We regard it with listlessness or loathing. We turn from it without regret. We cannot, or do not, wish to keep it in our memory.

Yet no student of Italian painting will refuse the Caracci that tribute of respect which is due to virile effort. They were in vital sympathy with the critical and analytical spirit of their age—an age mournfully conscious that its sceptre had departed—that

> Nothing can bring back the hour
> Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;

an age incapable as yet of acquiescing in this gloom, strenuously eager by study and by labour to regain the kingdom which belongs alone to inspiration. Science and industry enabled them to galvanise the corpse of art; into this they breathed the breath of the religion *à la mode*, of fashionable sensuousness and prevalent sentimentality.

Michelangelo died in 1564, Paolo Veronese in 1588, Tintoretto in 1594. These were the three latest survivors of the great generation, and each of them had enjoyed a life of activity prolonged into extreme old age. Their intellectual peers had long ago departed; Lionardo in 1520, Raphael in 1522, Correggio in 1534.

> Theirs was the giant race, before the flood.

These dates have to be kept in mind; for the painters of the Bolognese School were all born after 1550, born for the most part at that decisive epoch of the Tridentine Council which might be compared to a watershed of time between the Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation—Lodovico Caracci in 1555, Agostino in 1558, Annibale in 1560, Guido Reni in 1574, Lionello Spada in 1576, Francesco Albani in 1578,

Domenichino in 1581, Guercino in 1590.[1] With the last of these men the eclectic impulse was exhausted ; and a second generation, derived in part from them, linked the painters of the Renaissance to those of modern times. It is sufficient to mention Nicholas and Gaspar Poussin, Claude Lorraine, Salvator Rosa, Luca Giordano, and Canaletto as chief representatives of this secondary group.[2]

On examining the dates which I have given, it will be noticed that the Bolognese Eclectics, intervening between the age of Michelangelo and the age of Nicholas Poussin, worked during the first fervour of the Catholic Revival. Their art may therefore be taken as fairly representative of the religious temper and the profane culture of the Italians in the period influenced by the Council of Trent. It represents that temper and that culture before the decline of the same influence, when the Counter-Reformation was in active progress, and the Papal pretensions to absolute dominion had received no check.

We should be wrong, however, to treat the Eclectics as though they succeeded without interruption to that 'giant race, before the flood.' Their movement was emphatically one of revival ; and revival implies decadence. After 1541, when Michelangelo finished the Last Judgment, and before 1584, when the Caracci were working on their frescoes in the Palazzo Fava at Bologna—that is to say, between the last of the genuine Renaissance paintings and the first of the Revival—nearly half a century elapsed, during which art sank into a slough of slovenly and soulless putrescence.[3]

[1] The three founders of the school were thus born precisely during the most critical years of the Council. They felt the Catholic reaction least. That expressed itself most markedly in Domenichino, born seventeen years after its close.

[2] Nich. Poussin, b. 1594 ; Claude, 1600 ; Gaspar Poussin, 1613 ; Salvator Rosa, 1615 ; Luca Giordano, 1632 ; Canaletto, 1697.

[3] I of course except Venice, for reasons which I have sufficiently set

Every city of Italy swarmed with artists, adequately educated in technical methods, and apt at aping the grand style of their masters. But in all their work there is nothing felt, nothing thought out, nothing expressed, nothing imagined. It is a vast vacuity of meaningless and worthless brush-play, a wilderness of hollow trickery and futile fumbling with conventional forms. The Mannerists, as they were called, covered acres of palace and church walls with allegories, histories, and legends, carelessly designed, rapidly executed, but pleasing the eye with crowds of figures and with gaudy colours. Their colours are now faded. Their figures are now seen to be reminiscences of Raphael's, Correggio's, Buonarroti's draughtsmanship. Yet they satisfied the patrons of that time, who required hasty work, and had not much money wherewith to reward the mature labours of a conscientious student. In relation, moreover, to the spiritless and insincere architecture then coming into vogue, this art of the Mannerists can scarcely be judged out of place. When I divulge the names of Giorgio Vasari, Giuseppe Cesari (Cav. d' Arpino), Tempesta, Fontana, Tibaldi, the Zuccari, the Procaccini, the Campi of Cremona, the scholars of Perino del Vaga, I shall probably call up before the reluctant eyes of many of my readers visions of dreary wanderings through weariful saloons and of disconsolate starings up at stuccoed cupolas in Rome and Genoa, in Florence and Naples, and in all the towns of Lombardy.[1]

In an earlier volume I briefly sketched the development of this pernicious mannerism, which now deluged the arts of Italy. Only one painter, outside Venice, seems to have carried on a fairly good tradition. This was Federigo

forth in Vol. III., *The Fine Arts*, p. 254. Long after other schools of Italy the Venetian was still only adolescent.

[1] I have not thought it worth while to write down more than a very few names of the Mannerists. Notice how often they worked in whole families and indistinguishable coteries.

Baroccio (1528–1612), who feebly continued the style of Correggio, with a certain hectic originality, infusing sentimental pietism into that great master's pagan sensuousness. The mixture is disagreeable; and when one is obliged to mention Baroccio as the best in a bad period, this accentuates the badness of his contemporaries. He has, however, historical value from another point of view, inasmuch as nothing more strongly characterises the eclecticism of the Caracci than their partiality for Correggio.[1] Though I have no reason to suppose that Baroccio, living chiefly as he did at Urbino, directly influenced their style, the similarity between his ideal and theirs is certainly striking. It seems to point at something inevitable in the direction taken by the Eclectics.

Such was the state of art in Italy when Lodovico Caracci, the son of a Bolognese butcher, conceived his plan of replacing it upon a sounder system.[2] Instinct led him to Venice, where painting was still alive. The veteran Tintoretto warned him that he had no vocation. But Lodovico obstinately resolved to win by industry what nature seemed to have denied him. He studied diligently at Florence, Parma, Mantua, and Venice, founding his style upon those of

[1] Everyone familiar with European picture-galleries will remember cabinet pieces by the Caracci, especially Ecce Homos, Pietàs, Agonies in the Garden, which look like copies from Correggio with a dash of added sentimentalism.

[2] I have mainly used the encyclopædic work entitled *Felsina Pittrice* (Bologna, 1841, 2 vols.) for my study of the Eclectics. This is based upon the voluminous writings of the Count C. C. Malvasia, who, having been born in 1616, and having enjoyed personal intercourse with the later survivors of the Bolognese Academy, was able to bequeath a vast mass of anecdotical and other material to posterity. The collection contains critical annotations and additions by the hand of Zanotti and later art students, together with many illustrative documents of the highest value. Reading this miscellaneous repertory, we are forced to regret that the same amount of characteristic and authentic information has not been preserved about one of the greater schools of Italy—the Venetian, for example.

Andrea del Sarto, Correggio, Titian, Parmigiano, Giulio Romano, and Primaticcio. When he again settled at Bologna, he induced his two cousins, Agostino and Annibale, the sons of a tailor, to join him in the serious pursuit of art. Agostino was a goldsmith by trade, already expert in the use of the burin, which he afterwards employed more frequently than the brush.[1] Of the three Caracci he was the most versatile, and perhaps the most gifted. There is a note of distinction and attainment in his work. Annibale, the youngest, was a rough, wild, hasty, and hot-tempered lad, of robust build and vigorous intellect, but boorish in his manners, fond of low society, and eaten up with jealousy. They called him the *ragazzaccio*, or 'lout of a boy,' when he began to make his mark at Bologna. Agostino presented a strong contrast to his brother, being an accomplished musician, an excellent dancer, a fair poet, fit to converse with noblemen, and possessed of very considerable culture. Lodovico, the eldest of the cousins, acted as mentor and instructor to the others. He pacified their quarrels, when Annibale's jealousy burst out; set them upon the right methods of study, and passed judgment on their paintings.

Like Lodovico, the brothers served their first apprenticeship in art at Parma and Venice. Annibale's letters from the former place show how Correggio subdued him, and the large copies he there made still preserve for us some shadows of Correggio's time-ruined frescoes. At Venice he executed a copy of Titian's Peter Martyr. This picture, the most dramatic of Titian's works, and the most elaborate in its landscape, was destined to exercise a decisive influence over the Eclectic school. From the Caracci to Domenichino we are able to trace the dominant tone and composition of that masterpiece. No less decisive, as I have already observed,

[1] He acquired a somewhat infamous celebrity by his obscene engravings in the style of Giulio Romano.

was the influence of Correggio's peculiar style in the choice of type, the light and shade, and the foreshortenings of the Bolognese painters. In some degree, the manner of Paolo Veronese may also be discerned. The Caracci avoided Tintoretto, and at the beginning of their career they derived but little from Raphael or Michelangelo. Theirs was at first a mainly Veneto-Lombardic eclecticism, dashed with something absorbed from Giulio Romano and something from the later Florentines. It must not, however, be supposed that they confined their attention to Italian painters. They contrived to collect casts from antique marbles, coins, engravings of the best German and Italian workmanship, books on architecture and perspective, original drawings, and similar academical appliances. Nor were they neglectful of drawing from the nude, or of anatomy. Indeed, their days and nights were spent in one continuous round of study, which had for its main object the comparison of dead and living nature with the best specimens of art in all ages. It may seem strange that this assiduity and thoroughness of method did not produce work of higher quality. Yet we must remember that even enthusiastic devotion to art will not give inspiration, and that the most thorough science cannot communicate charm. Though the Caracci invented fresh attitudes and showed complete mastery of the human form, their types remained commonplace. Though their chiaroscuro was accurately based on that of Correggio, it lacked his aërial play of semitones. Though they went straight to Titian for colour, they never approached Venetian lucidity and glow. There was something vulgar in their imagination, prosaic in their feeling, leaden in their frigid touch on legend. Who wants those countless gods and goddesses of the Farnese Gallery, those beblubbered saints and colossal Sibyls of the Bolognese Pinacoteca, those chubby cherubs and buxom nymphs, those Satyrs and S. Sebastians, to come down from

the walls and live with us? The grace of Raphael's Galatea, the inspiration of Michelangelo's Genii of the Sistine, the mystery of Lionardo's Faun S. John, the wilding grace of Correggio's Diana, the voluptuous fascination of Titian's Venus, the mundane seductiveness of Veronese's Europa, the golden glory of Tintoretto's Bacchus,—all have evanesced, and in their place are hard mechanic figures, excellently drawn, correctly posed, but with no touch of poetry. Where, indeed, shall we find 'the light that never was on sea or land' throughout Bologna?[1]

Part of this failure must be ascribed to a radically false conception of the way to combine studies of nature with studies of art. The Eclectics in general started with the theory that a painter ought to form mental ideals of beauty, strength, dignity, ferocity, and so forth, from the observation of characteristic individuals and acknowledged masterpieces. These ideal types he has to preserve in his memory, and to use living persons only as external means for bringing them into play. Thus, it was indifferent who sat to him as model. He believed that he could invest the ugliest lump of living flesh with the loveliest fancy. Lodovico supplied Annibale Caracci with the fleshy back of a naked Venus. Guido Reni painted his Madonna's heads from any beardless pupil who came handy, and turned his deformed colour-grinder—a man 'with a muzzle like a renegado'—into the penitent

[1] Malvasia has preserved, in his *Life of Primaticcio*, a sonnet written by Agostino Caracci, in which the aims of the Eclectics are clearly indicated. The good painter must have at his command Roman or classic design, Venetian movement and shadow, Lombard colouring, the sublimity of Michelangelo, the truth to nature of Titian, the pure and sovereign style of Correggio, Raphael's symmetry, Tibaldi's fitness and solidity, Primaticcio's erudite invention, with something of Parmigianino's grace (*Fels. Pittr.* vol. i. p. 129). Zanotti adds: 'This sonnet is assuredly one which every painter ought to learn by heart and observe in practice.'

Magdalen.[1] It was inevitable that forms and faces thus evolved should bear the stamp of mediocrity, monotony, and dulness on them. Few, very few, painters—perhaps only Michelangelo—have been able to give to purely imagined forms the value and the individuality of persons; and he succeeded best in this perilous attempt when he designed the passionate Genii of the Sistine frescoes. Such flights were far beyond the grasp of the Eclectics. Seeking after the 'grand style,' they fell, as I shall show in the sequel of this chapter, into commonplace vacuity, which makes them now insipid.[2]

There was at this time a native of Antwerp named Dionysius Calvaert, a coarse fellow of violent manners, who kept open school in Bologna. The best of the Caracci's pupils—Guido Reni, Domenichino and Albani—emigrated to their academy from this man's workshop. Something, as it seems to me, peculiar in the method of handling oil paint, which all three have in common, may perhaps be ascribed to early training under their Flemish master. His brutality drove them out of doors; and, having sought the protection of Lodovico Caracci, they successively made such progress in the methods of painting as rendered them the most distinguished representatives of the Bolognese Revival. All three were men of immaculate manners. Guido Reni, beautiful as a Sibyl in youth, with blonde hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion, was, to the end of his illustrious career, reputed

[1] See Malvasia, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 277; vol. ii. p. 57. The odd thing is that Malvasia tells these stories of the Lodovico-Aphrodite and the colour-grinder-Magdalen with applause, as though they proved the mastery of Annibale Caracci and Guido.

[2] The later Eclectics—Spada, Domenichino, Guercino—were to some extent saved by the influences they derived from Caravaggio and the Naturalisti. But they had not the tact to see where the finer point of naturalistic art lies for a delicately minded painter. They added its brutality, as employed by Caravaggio, to the insipidities of the Caracci, and produced such horrors as Domenichino's Martyrdom of S. Agnes.

a virgin. Albani, who translated into delicate oil-painting the sensuousness of the 'Adone,' studied the forms of Nymphs and Venuses from his lovely wife, and the limbs of Amorini from the children whom she bore him regularly every year. Domenichino, a man of shy, retiring habits, preoccupied with the psychological problems which he strove to translate into dramatic pictures, doted on one woman, whom he married, and who lived to deplore his death (as she believed) by poison. Guido was specially characterised by devotion to Madonna. He was a singular child. On every Christmas eve, for seven successive years, ghostly knockings were heard upon his chamber-door; and, every night, when he awoke from sleep the darkness above his bed was illuminated by a mysterious egg-shaped globe of light.[1] His eccentricity in later life amounted to insanity, and at last he gave himself up wholly to the demon of the gaming-table. Domenichino obeyed only one passion, if we except his passion for the wife he loved so dearly, and this was music. He displayed some strangeness of temperament in a morbid dislike of noise and interruptions. Otherwise, nothing disturbed the even current of an existence dedicated to solving questions of art. Albani mixed more freely in the world than Domenichino, enjoyed the pleasures of the table and of sumptuous living, but with Italian sobriety, and expatiated in those spheres of literature which supplied him with motives for his coldly sensual pictures. Yet he maintained the credit of a thoroughly domestic, soundly natured, and vigorously wholesome man.

I have thought it well thus to preface what I have to say

[1] This tradition of Guido's childhood I give for what it is worth, from Malvasia, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 53. In after life, beside being piously addicted to Madonna-worship, he had a great dread of women in general and witches in particular. What some will call spiritual, others effeminate, in his mature work may be due to the temperament thus indicated.

about these masters, partly because critics of the modern stamp, trusting more to their subjective impressions than to authoritative records, have painted the moral characters of Guido and Domenichino in lurid colours, and also because there is certainly something in their work which leaves a painful memory of unhealthy sentiment, impassiveness to pain, and polished carnalism on the mind. It may incidentally be recorded that Lodovico Caracci, Guido Reni, and Francesco Albani are all of them, on very good authority, reported to have been even prudishly modest in their use of female models. They never permitted a woman to strip entirely, and Guido carried his reserve to such a pitch that he preferred to leave his studio door open while drawing from a woman.[1] Malevolence might suggest that this was only part and parcel of post-Tridentine hypocrisy; and probably there is truth in the suggestion. I certainly do not reckon such solicitous respect for garments entirely to their credit. But it helps us to understand the eccentric compound of sentiment, sensuality, piety, and uneasy morality which distinguished the age, and which is continually perplexing the student of its art.

Of these three men, Guido was the most genially endowed. He alone derived a true spark from the previous age of inspiration. He wearies us indeed with his effeminacy, and with the reiteration of a physical type sentimentalised from the head and bust of Niobe. But thoughts of real originality and grace not seldom visited his meditations; and he alone deserved the name of colourist among the painters I have as yet ascribed to the Bolognese School.[2] Guido affected a cool harmony of blue, white, and deadened gold, which in the

[1] Malvasia, *op. cit.* p. 53, p. 178. The latter passage is preceded by a discussion of the nude in art which shows how Malvasia had imbibed Tridentine morality in the middle of Italy glowing with Renaissance masterpieces.

[2] Lo Spada and Guercino, afterwards to be mentioned, were certainly colourists.

best pictures of his second manner—the Fortune, the Bacchus and Ariadne of S. Luke's in Rome, the Crucifixion at Modena—has a charm akin to that of Metastasio's silvery lyrics. The Samson at Bologna rises above these works both in force of conception and glow of colour. The Aurora of the Rospigliosi Casino attempts a wider scheme of hues, and is certainly, except for some lack of refinement in the attendant Hours, a very noble composition. The S. Michael of the Cappuccini is seductive by its rich bravura style; and the large Pietà in the Bolognese Gallery impresses our mind by a monumental sadness and sobriety of tone. The Massacre of the Innocents, though one of Guido's most ambitious efforts, and though it displays an ingenious adaptation of the Niobe to Raphael's mannerism, fails by falling between two aims—the aim to secure dramatic effect, and the aim to treat a terrible subject with harmonious repose.

Of Albani nothing need be said in detail. Most people know his pictures of the Four Elements, so neatly executed in a style adapting Flemish smoothness of surface to Italian suavity of line. This sort of art delighted the cardinals and Monsignori of the seventeenth century. But it has nothing whatsoever to say to any human soul.

On Domenichino's two most famous pictures at Bologna Mr. Ruskin has written one of his overpoweringly virulent invectives.[1] It is worth inserting here at length. More passionate words could hardly be chosen to express the disgust inspired in minds attuned to earlier Italian art by these once worshipped paintings. Mr. Ruskin's obvious injustice, intemperance, and ostentatious emphasis will serve to point the change of opinion which has passed over England since Sir Joshua Reynolds wrote. His denunciation of the badness of Domenichino's art, though expressed with such a clangour of exaggeration, fairly represents the feeling of modern students.

[1] *Modern Painters*, vol. i. p. 87.

'The man,' he says, 'who painted the Madonna del Rosario and Martyrdom of S. Agnes in the gallery of Bologna, is palpably incapable of doing anything good, great, or right in any field, way, or kind whatsoever. . . . This is no rash method of judgment, sweeping and hasty as it may appear. From the weaknesses of an artist, or failures, however numerous, we have no right to conjecture his total inability; a time may come when he shall rise into sudden strength, or an instance occur when his efforts shall be successful. But there are some pictures which rank not under the head of failures, but of perpetrations or commissions; some things which a man cannot do or say without sealing for ever his character and capacity. The angel holding the cross with his finger in his eye, the roaring, red-faced children about the crown of thorns, the blasphemous (I speak deliberately and determinedly) head of Christ upon the handkerchief, and the mode in which the martyrdom of the saint is exhibited (I do not choose to use the expressions which alone could characterise it), are perfect, sufficient, incontrovertible proofs that whatever appears good in any of the doings of such a painter must be deceptive, and that we may be assured that our taste is corrupted and false whenever we feel disposed to admire him. I am prepared to support this position, however uncharitable it may seem; a man may be tempted into a gross sin by passion, and forgiven; and yet there are some kinds of sins into which only men of a certain kind can be tempted, and which cannot be forgiven. It should be added, however, that the artistical qualities of these pictures are in every way worthy of the conceptions they realise; I do not recollect any instance of colour or execution so coarse and feelingless.'

We have only to think of the S. Agnes by Tintoretto, or of Luini's S. Catherine, in order to be well aware how far Domenichino, as a painter, deviated from the right path of

art.[1] Yet we are bound to acquit him, as a man, of that moral obliquity which Mr. Ruskin seems to impute. Indeed, we know Domenichino to have been an unaffectedly good fellow. He was misled by his dramatic bias, and also by the prevalent religious temper of his age. Jesuitry had saturated the Italian mind; and in a former chapter I have dwelt upon the concrete materialism which formed the basis of the Jesuitical imagination. In portraying the martyrdom of S. Agnes as he has done, Domenichino was only obeying the rules of Loyola's 'Exercitia.' That he belonged to a school which was essentially vulgar in its choice of type, to a city never distinguished for delicacy of taste, and to a generation which was rapidly losing the sense of artistic reserve, suffices to explain the crude brutality of the conceptions which he formed of tragic episodes.[2] The same may be said about all those horrible pictures of tortures, martyrdoms, and acts of violence which were produced by the dozen in Italy at this epoch. We turn from them with loathing. They inspire neither terror nor pity, only the sickness of the shambles. And yet it would be unjust to ascribe their unimaginative ghastliness to any special love of cruelty. This evil element may be rationally deduced from false dramatic instinct and perverted habits of brooding sensuously on our Lord's Passion, in minds deprived of the right feeling for artistic beauty. Probably Domenichino thought that he was surpassing Titian's Peter Martyr when he painted his hard and hideous

[1] I allude to the Tintoretto in S. Maria dell' Orto at Venice, and to the Luini in the Monastero Maggiore at Milan. Yet the model of Luini's S. Catherine was the infamous Contessa di Cellant, who murdered her husband and some lovers, and was beheaded for her crimes in Milan. This fact demonstrates the value of the model in the hands of an artist capable of using it.

[2] When I assert that the age was losing the sense of artistic reserve, I wish to refer back to what I have written about Marino, the dictator of the age in matters of taste. See above, pp. 152–153.

parody of that great picture. Yet Titian had already touched the extreme verge of allowable realisation, and his work belonged to the sphere of high pictorial art mainly by right of noble treatment. Of this noble treatment, and of the harmonious colouring which shed a sanctifying splendour over the painful scene, Domenichino stripped his master's design. What he added was grimace, spasm, and the expression of degrading physical terror.

That Domenichino could be, in his own way, stately, is proved by the Communion of S. Jerome, in which he rehandled Agostino Caracci's fine conception. Though devoid of charm, this justly celebrated painting remains a monument of the success which may be achieved by the vigorous application of robust intellectual powers to the working out of a well-conceived and fully developed composition. Domenichino's gigantic saints and Sibyls, with their fleshy limbs, red cheeks, and upturned eyes, though famous enough in the last century, do not demand a word of comment now.[1] So strangely has taste altered, that to our eyes they seem scarcely decorative.

While the Caracci were reviving art at Bologna in the way that I have described, Caravaggio in Rome opposed the Mannerists after his own and a very different fashion.[2] The insipidities of men like Cesari drove him into a crude realism. He resolved to describe sacred and historical events just as though they were being enacted in the Ghetto by butchers and fishwives. This reaction against flimsy emptiness was wholesome; and many interesting studies from the taverns of Italy, portraits of gamesters, sharpers, bravi and the like, remain to prove Caravaggio's mastery over scenes of common life.[3] But when he applied his principles to higher subjects,

[1] Go to S. Andrea nella Valle in Rome, to study the best of them.

[2] Michelangelo Amerighi da Caravaggio (1569–1609).

[3] For the historian of manners in seventeenth-century Italy those pictures have a truly precious value, as they are executed with such

their vulgarity became apparent. Only in one picture, the Entombment, in the Vatican, did he succeed in affecting imagination forcibly by the evident realisation of a tragic scene. His martyrdoms are inexpressibly revolting, without appeal to any sense but savage blood-lust. It seems difficult for realism, either in literature or art, not to fasten upon ugliness, vice, pain, and disease, as though these imperfections of our nature were more real than beauty, goodness, pleasure, and health. Therefore Caravaggio, the leader of a school which the Italians christened Naturalists, may be compared to Zola.

A Spaniard, settled at Naples—Giuseppe Ribera, nicknamed Lo Spagnoletto—carried on Caravaggio's tradition. Spagnoletto surpassed his master in the brutally realistic expression of physical anguish. His Prometheus writhing under the beak of the vulture, his disembowelled martyrs and skinless S. Bartholomews, are among the most nauseous products of a masculine nature blessed with robust health. Were they delirious or hysterical, they would be less disgusting. But no; they are merely vigorous and faithful representations of what anybody might have witnessed, when a traitor like Ravaillac or a Lombard *untore* was being put to death in agony. His firm mental grip on cruelty, and the sombre gloom with which he invested these ghastly transcripts from the torture-chamber, prove Ribera true to his Spanish origin. Caravaggio delighted in colour, and was indeed a colourist of high rank, considering the times in which he lived. Spagnoletto rejoiced in sombre shadows, as though to illustrate the striking sonnet I have quoted in another place from Campanella.[1]

This digression upon the Naturalists was needed partly to

passion as to raise them above the more careful but more lymphatic transcripts from beer-cellars, in Dutch painting.

[1] See above, Vol. VI. p. 34.

illustrate the nature of the attempted revival of the art of painting at this epoch, and partly to introduce two notable masters of the Bolognese School. Lionello Spada, a street-arab of Bologna, found his way into the studio of the Caracci, where he made himself a favourite by roguish ways and ready wit. He afterwards joined Caravaggio, and, when he reappeared in Lombardy, he had formed a manner of his own, more resplendent in colour and more naturalistic than that of the Caracci, but with less of realism than his Roman teacher's. If I could afford space for anecdotical details, the romance of Spada's life would furnish much entertaining material. But I must press on toward Guercino, who represents in a more famous personality this blending of the Bolognese and Naturalistic styles. Giovanni Francesco Barbieri got his nickname of Il Guercino, or the 'Squintling,' from an accident which distorted his right eye in babyhood. Born of poor parents, he was apprenticed to indifferent painters in Bologna at an early age, his father agreeing to pay for the boy's education by a load of grain and a vat of grapes delivered yearly. Thus Guercino owed far less to academical studies than to his own genius. Being Lodovico Caracci's junior by thirty-five years, and Annibale's by thirty, he had ample opportunities for studying the products of their school in Bologna, without joining the Academy. A generation lay between him and the first Eclectics. Nearly the same space of time separated Guercino from the founder of the Naturalists, and it was universally admitted in his lifetime that he owed to Caravaggio in colouring no less than he derived from the Caracci in sobriety and dignity of conception. These qualities of divergent schools Guercino combined in a manner marked by salient individuality. As a colourist, he approached the Tenebrosi—those lovers of surcharged shadows and darkened hues, whose gloom culminated in Ribera. But we note a fat and buttery *impasto* in Guercino, which distinguishes

his work from the drier and more meagre manner of the Roman-Neapolitan painters. It is something characteristic of Bologna, a richness which we might flippantly compare to sausage, or a Flemish smoothness, indicating Calvaert's influence. More than this, Guercino possessed a harmony of tones peculiar to himself, and strongly contrasted with Guido's silver-grey gradations. Guido's colouring, at its best, often reminds one of olive branches set against a blue sea and pale horizon in faintly amber morning light. The empurpled indigos, relieved by smouldering Venetian red, which Guercino loved, suggest thunder-clouds, dispersed, rolling away through dun subdued glare of sunset reflected upward from the west. And this scheme of colour, vivid but heavy, luminous but sullen, corresponded to what contemporaries called the *terribilità* of Guercino's conception. Terribleness was a word which came into vogue to describe Michelangelo's grand manner. It implied audacity of imagination, dashing draughtsmanship, colossal scale, something demonic and decisive in execution.[1] The terrible takes in Guercino's work far lower flights than in the Sistine Chapel. With Michelangelo it soared like an eagle ; with Guercino it flitted like a bat. His brawny saints are ponderous, not awe-inspiring. Yet we feel that the man loved largeness, massiveness, and volume ; that he was preoccupied with intellectual problems ; planning deeply, and constructing strongly, under conditions unfavourable to spiritual freedom.

Guercino lived the life of an anchorite, absorbed in studies, unwived, sober, pious, truthful, sincere in his commerce with the world, unaffectedly virtuous, devoted to his art and God. Some of his pictures bring forcibly before our minds the religious *milieu* created by the Catholic Revival. I will take

[1] But the men who used the word failed to perceive that what justified these qualities in Michelangelo's work was piercing, poignant, spiritual passion, of which their age had nothing.

the single instance of a large oil-painting in the Bolognese Gallery. It represents the reception of a Duke of Aquitaine into monastic orders by S. Bernard. The knightly quality of the hero is adequately portrayed; his piety is masculine. But an accessory to the main subject of the composition arrests attention. A monk, earnestly pleading, emphatically gesticulating, addresses himself to the task of converting a young squire. Perugino, or even Raphael, would have brought the scene quite otherwise before us. The Duke's consecration would of course have occupied a commanding place in the picture. But the episodes would have been composed of comely groups or animated portraits. Guercino, obedient to the religious spirit of the Counter-Reformation, compels sympathy with ecclesiastical propaganda.

Guido exercised a powerful influence over his immediate successors. Guercino felt it when he painted that soulless picture of Abraham and Hagar, in the Brera—the picture which excited Byron's admiration, which has been praised for its accurate delineation of a teardrop, and which, when all is reckoned, has just nothing of emotion in it but a frigid inhumanity. He competed with Guido in the fresco of the Lodovisi Aurora, a substantial work certainly, yet one that lacks the saving qualities of the Rospigliosi ceiling—grace and geniality of fancy.

In the history of criticism there are few things more perplexing than the vicissitudes of taste and celebrity, whereby the idols of past generations crumble suddenly to dust, while the despised and rejected are lifted to pinnacles of glory. Successive waves of æsthetical preference, following one upon the other with curious rapidity, sweep ancient fortresses of fame from their venerable basements, and raise upon the crests of wordy foam some delicate sea-shell that erewhile lay embedded in oblivious sand. During the last half-century, taste has been more capricious, revolutionary, and apparently

anarchical than at any previous epoch. The unity of orthodox opinion has broken up. Critics have sought to display originality by depreciating names famous in former ages, and by exalting minor stars to the rank of luminaries of the first magnitude. A man, yet in middle life, can remember with what reverence engravings after Raphael, the Caracci, and Poussin were treated in his boyhood; how Fra Angelico and Perugino ruled at a somewhat later period; how one set of eloquent writers discovered Blake, another Botticelli, and a third Carpaccio; how Signorelli and Bellini and Mantegna received tardy recognition; and now, of late years, how Tiepolo has bidden fair to obtain the European *grido*. He will also bear in mind that the conditions of his own development—studies in the Elgin marbles, the application of photography to works of art, the publications of the Arundel Society, and that genius of new culture in the air which is more potent than all teaching, rendered for himself each oracular utterance interesting but comparatively unimportant—as it were but talk about truths evident to sight.

Meanwhile, amid this gabble of 'sects and schisms,' this disputation which makes a simple mind take refuge in the epigram attributed to Swift on Handel and Bononcini,[1] criticism and popular intelligence have been unanimous upon two points: first, in manifesting a general dislike for Italian art after the date of Raphael's third manner, and a particular dislike for the Bolognese painters; secondly, in an earnest effort to discriminate and exhibit what is sincere and beautiful in works to which our forefathers were unintelligibly irresponsive. A wholesome reaction, in one word, has taken place against academical dogmatism; and the study of art has been based upon appreciably better historical and æsthetical principles.

[1] 'Strange that such difference should be
'Twixt tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee.'

The seeming confusion of the last half-century ought not, therefore, to shake our confidence in the possibility of arriving at stable laws of taste. Radical revolutions, however salutary, cannot be effected without some injustice to ideals of the past, and without some ill-grounded enthusiasm for the ideals of the moment. Nor can so wide a region as that of modern European art be explored except by divers pioneers, each biassed by personal predilections and peculiar sensibilities, each liable to changes of opinion under the excitement of discovery, each followed by a coterie sworn to support their master's *ipse dixit.*

The chief thing is to obtain a clear conception of the mental atmosphere in which sound criticism has to live and move and have its being. 'The form of this world passes; and I would fain occupy myself only with that which constitutes abiding relations.' So said Goethe; and these words have much the same effect as that admonition of his 'to live with steady purpose in the Whole, the Good, the Beautiful.' The true critic must divert his mind from what is transient and ephemeral, must fasten upon abiding relations, *bleibende Verhältnisse.* He notes that one age is classical, another romantic; that *this* swears by Giotto, *that* by the Caracci. Meanwhile, he resolves to maintain that classics and romantics, the Caracci and Giotto, are alike only worthy of regard in so far as they exemplify the qualities which bring art into the sphere of abiding relations. One writer is eloquent for Fra Angelico, another for Rubens; the one has personal sympathy for the Fiesolan monk, the other for the Flemish courtier. Our true critic renounces idiosyncratic whims and partialities, striving to enter with firm purpose into the understanding of universal goodness and beauty. In so far as he finds truth in Angelico and Rubens, will he be appreciative of both.

Aristotle laid it down as an axiom that the ultimate

verdict in matters of taste is 'what the man of enlightened intelligence would decide.' The critic becomes a man of enlightened intelligence, a φρόνιμος, by following the line of Goethe's precepts. In working out self-culture, he will derive assistance by the way from the commanding philosophical conception of our century. All things with which we are acquainted are in evolutionary process. Everything belonging to human nature is in a state of organic transition—passing through necessary phases of birth, growth, decline, and death. Art, in any one of its specific manifestations—Italian painting for example—avoids this law of organic evolution, arrests development at the fairest season of growth, averts the decadence which ends in death, no more than does an oak. The oak, starting from an acorn, nourished by earth, air, light, and water, offers indeed a simpler problem than so complex an organism as Italian painting, developed under conditions of manifold diversity. Yet the dominant law controls both equally.

It is not, however, in evolution that we must seek the abiding relations spoken of by Goethe. The evolutionary conception does not supply those to students of art, though it unfolds a law which is permanent and of universal application in the world at large. It forces us to dwell on necessary conditions of mutability and transformation. It leads the critic to comprehend the whole, and encourages the habit of scientific tolerance. We are saved by it from uselessly fretting ourselves because of the ungodly and the inevitable; from mourning over the decline of Gothic architecture into Perpendicular aridity and flamboyant feebleness, over the passage of the sceptre from Sophocles to Euripides or from Tasso to Marino, over the chaos of Mannerism, Eclecticism, and Naturalism into which Italian painting plunged from the height of its maturity. This toleration and acceptance of unavoidable change need not imply want of discriminative

perception. We can apply the evolutionary canon in all strictness without ignoring that adult manhood is preferable to senile decrepitude, that Pheidias surpasses the sculptors of Antinous, that one Madonna of Gian Bellini is worth all the pictures of the younger Palma, and that Dossi's portrait of the Ferrarese jester is better worth having than the whole of Annibale Caracci's Galleria Farnesina.[1] It will even lead us to select for models those works which bear the mark of adolescence or vigorous maturity, as supplying more fruitful sources for our own artistic education.

Nevertheless, not in evolution, but in man's soul, his intellectual and moral nature, must be sought those abiding relations which constitute sound art, and are the test of right æsthetic judgment. These are such as truth, simplicity, sobriety, love, grace, patience, modesty, thoughtfulness, repose, health, vigour, brain-stuff, dignity of imagination, lucidity of vision, purity, and depth of feeling. Wherever the critic finds these—whether it be in Giotto at the dawn or in Guido at the evensong of Italian painting, in Homer or Theocritus at the two extremes of Greek poetry—he will recognise the work as ranking with those things from which the soul draws nourishment. At the same time, he may not neglect the claims of craftsmanship. Each art has its own vehicle of expression, and exacts some innate capacity for the use of that vehicle from the artist. Therefore the critic must be also sufficiently versed in technicalities to give them their due value. It can, however, be laid down, as a general truth, that while immature or awkward workmanship is compatible with æsthetic excellence, technical dexterity, however skilfully applied, has never done anything for a soulless painter.

Criticism, furthermore, implies judgment; and that judgment must be adjusted to the special nature of the thing

[1] The great picture by Dosso Dossi, to which I have alluded, is in the Modenese gallery.

criticised. Art is different from ethics, from the physical world, from sensuality, however refined. It will not, therefore, in the long run, do for the critic of an art to apply the same rules as the moralist, the naturalist, or the hedonist. It will not do for him to be contented with edification, or differentiation of species, or demonstrable delightfulness, as the test-stone of artistic excellence. All art is a presentation of the inner human being, his thought and feeling, through the medium of beautiful symbols in form, colour, and sound. Our verdict must therefore be determined by the amount of thought, the amount of feeling, proper to noble humanity, which we find adequately expressed in beautiful æsthetic symbols. And the man who shall pronounce this verdict is, now as in the days of Aristotle, the man of enlightened intelligence, sound in his own nature and open to ideas. Even his verdict will not be final; for no one is wholly free from partialities due to the age in which he lives, and to his special temperament. Still, a consensus of such verdicts eventually forms that voice of the people which, according to an old proverb, is the voice of God. Slowly, and after many successive siftings, the cumulative votes of the φρόνιμοι decide. Insurgents against their judgment, in the case of acknowledged masters like Pheidias, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, are doomed to final defeat, because this judgment is really based upon abiding relations between art and human nature.

Our hope with regard to the unity of taste in the future then is, that, all sentimental or academical seekings after the ideal having been abandoned, momentary theories founded upon idiosyncratic or temporary partialities exploded, and nothing accepted but what is solid and positive, the scientific spirit shall make men progressively more and more conscious of those *bleibende Verhältnisse*, more and more capable of living in the whole; also that, in proportion as we gain a firmer hold upon our own place in the world, we shall come

to comprehend with more instinctive certitude what is simple, natural, and honest, welcoming with gladness all artistic products that exhibit these qualities. The perception of the enlightened man will then be the taste of a healthy person who has made himself acquainted with the laws of evolution in art and in society, and is able to test the excellence of work in any stage, from immaturity to decadence, by discerning what there is of truth, sincerity, and natural vigour in it.

This digression was forced upon me by the difficulty of properly appreciating the Bolognese Eclectics now. What would be the amused astonishment of Sir Joshua Reynolds, if he returned to London at the present moment, and beheld the Dagon of his esteemed Caracci dashed to pieces by the ark of Botticelli—Carpaccio enthroned—Raffaello stigmatised as the stone of stumbling and the origin of evil? Yet Reynolds had as good a right to his opinion as any living master of the brush, or any living master of language. There is no doubt that the Bolognese painters sufficed for the eighteenth century, whose taste indeed they had created.[1] There is equally no doubt that for the nineteenth they are insufficient.[2] The main business of a critic is to try to answer two questions: first, why did the epoch produce such art, and why did it rejoice in it?—secondly, has this art any real

[1] The passage from Lodovico Caracci through Poussin to Reynolds is direct and unbroken. 'Poussin,' says Lanzi, 'ranked Domenichino directly next to Raffaello.' *History of Painting in Italy*, Engl. Tr. vol. iii. p. 84.

[2] Perhaps a generation will yet arise which shall take the Caracci and their scholars into favour, even as people of refinement in our own days find a charm in patches, powder, perukes, sedan-chairs, patchouli, and other lumber from the age despised by Keats. I remember visiting a noble English lady at her country seat. We drank tea in her room, decorated by a fashionable 'Queen Anne' artist. She told us that the quaintly pretty furniture of the last century which adorned it had recently been brought down from the attic, whither her forebears had consigned it as tasteless—Gillow in their minds superseding Chippendale.

worth beyond a documentary value for the students of one defined historical period; has it enduring qualities of originality, strength, beauty, and inspiration? To the first of these questions I have already given some answer by showing under what conditions the Caracci reacted against mannerism. In the due consideration of the second we are hampered by the culture of our period, which has strongly prejudiced all minds against the results of that reaction.

The painting of the Eclectics was not spontaneous art. It was art mechanically revived during a period of critical hesitancy and declining enthusiasms. It was produced at Bologna, 'la dotta' or 'la grassa,' by Bolognese craftsmen. This is worth remembering; for, except Guido Guinicelli and Francesco Raibolini, no natives of Bologna were eminently gifted for the arts. And Bologna was the city famous for her ponderous learning, famous also for the good cheer of her table, neither erudition nor savoury meats being essential to the artist's temperament. The painting which emerged there at the close of the sixteenth century embodied religion and culture, both of a base alloy. The Christianity of the age was not naïve, simple, sincere, and popular, like that of the thirteenth century; but hysterical, dogmatic, hypocritical, and sacerdotal. It was not Christianity indeed, but Catholicism galvanised by terror into reactionary movement. The culture of the age was on the wane. Men had long lost their first clean perception of classical literature, and the motives of the medieval past were exhausted. Therefore, though the Eclectics went on painting the old subjects, they painted all alike with frigid superficiality. If we examine the lists of pictures turned out by the Caracci and Guercino, we shall find a pretty equal quantity of saints and Susannas, Judiths and Cleopatras, Davids and Bacchuses, Jehovahs and Jupiters, anchorites and Bassarids, Faiths and Fortunes, cherubs and Cupids. Artistically, all are on the same dead level of

inspiration. Nothing new or vital, fanciful or imaginative, has been breathed into antique mythology. What has been added to religious expression is repellent. Extravagantly ideal in ecstatic Magdalens and Maries, extravagantly realistic in martyrdoms and torments, extravagantly harsh in dogmatic mysteries and the ecclesiastical parade of power, extravagantly soft in sentimental tenderness and tearful piety, this new religious element, the element of the Inquisition, the Tridentine Council, and the Jesuits, contradicts the true gospel of Christ. The painting which embodies it belongs to a spirit at strife with what was vital and progressive in the modern world. It is therefore naturally abhorrent to us now; nor can it be appreciated except by those who yearn for the triumph of ultramontane principles.

If we turn from the intellectual content of this art to its external manifestation, we shall find similar reasons for its failure to delight or satisfy. The ambition of the Caracci was to combine in one the salient qualities of earlier masters. This ambition doomed their style to the sterility of hybrids. Moreover, in selecting, they omitted just those features which had given grace and character to their models. The substitution of generic types for portraiture, the avoidance of individuality, the contempt for what is simple and natural in details, deprived their work of attractiveness and suggestion. It is noticeable that they never painted flowers. While studying Titian's landscapes, they omitted the iris and the caper-blossom and the columbine which star the grass beneath Ariadne's feet. The lessons of the rocks and chestnut-trees of his S. Jerome's Solitude were lost on them. They began the false system of depicting ideal foliage and ideal precipices—that is to say, trees which are not trees, and cliffs which cannot be distinguished from cork or stucco. In like manner, the clothes wherewith they clad their personages were not of brocade or satin or broadcloth, but of that empty lie called drapery.

The purfled silks of Titian's Lilac Lady, in the Pitti, the embroidered hems of Boccaccini da Cremona, the crimson velvet of Raphael's Joanna of Aragon, Veronese's cloth of silver and shot taffety, are replaced by one monotonous nondescript stuff, differently dyed in dull or glaring colours, but always shoddy. Characteristic costumes have disappeared. We shall not find in any of their Massacres of the Innocents a soldier like Bonifazio's Dall' Armi. In lieu of gems with flashing facets, or of quaint jewels from the Oreficeria, they adorn their kings and princesses with nothing less elevated than polished gold and ropes of pearls. After the same fashion, furniture, utensils, houses, animals, birds, weapons, are idealised—stripped, that is to say, of what in these things is specific and vital.

It would be incorrect to say that there are no exceptions in Eclectic painting to this evil system. Yet the sweeping truth remains that the Caracci returned, not to what was best in their predecessors, but to what was dangerous and misleading.

The 'grand style,' in Sir Joshua's sense of that phrase, denoting style which eliminates specific and characteristic qualities from objects, replacing them by so-called 'ideal' generalities, had already made its appearance in Raphael, Correggio, and Buonarroti. We even find it in Da Vinci's Last Supper. Yet in Raphael it comes attended with divine grace; in Correggio with faun-like radiancy of gladness; in Buonarroti with Sinaitic sublimity; in Da Vinci with penetrative force of psychological characterisation. The Caracci and their followers, with a few exceptions—Guido at his best being the notablest—brought nothing of these saving virtues to the pseudo-grand style.

It was this delusion regarding nobility and elevation in style which betrayed so genial a painter as Reynolds into his appreciation of the Bolognese masters. He admired them;

but he admired Titian, Raphael, Correggio, and Buonarroti more. And he admired the Eclectics because they developed the perilous part of the great Italian tradition. Just as Coleridge recommended young students of dramatic verse to found their style at first on Massinger rather than on Shakespeare, so Reynolds thought that the Caracci were sound models for beginners in the science of idealisation. Shakespeare and Michelangelo are inimitable ; Massinger and the Caracci exhibit the one thing needful to be learned, upon a scale not wholly unattainable by industry and talent. That was the line of argument; and, granted that the pseudo-grand style is a *sine quâ non* of painting, Reynolds's position was logical.[1]

The criticism and the art-practice of this century have combined to shake our faith in the grand style. The spirit of the Romantic movement, penetrating poetry first, then manifesting itself in the reflective writings of Rio and Lord Lindsay, Ruskin and Gautier, producing the English landscape-painters and pre-Raphaelites, the French Realists and Impressionists, has shifted the centre of gravity in taste. Science, too, contributes its quota. Histories of painting, like Kugler's, and Crowe and Cavalcaselle's, composed in an impartial and searching spirit of investigation, place students at a point of view removed from prejudice and academical canons of perfection. Only here and there, under special reactionary influences, as in the Düsseldorf and Munich schools of religious purists, has anything approaching to the eighteenth-century 'grand style' delusion reappeared.

Why, therefore, the Eclectics are at present pining in the

[1] It is only because I am an Englishman, writing a popular book for English folk, that I thus spend time in noticing the opinions of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Addressing a European audience in this year of grace, I should not have thought of eddying about his obsolete doctrine.

shade of neglect is now sufficiently apparent. We dislike their religious sentiments. We repudiate their false and unimaginative ideality. We recognise their touch on antique mythology to be cold and lifeless. Superficial imitations of Niobe and the Belvedere Apollo have no attraction for a generation educated by the marbles of the Parthenon. Dull reproductions of Raphael's manner at his worst cannot delight men satiated with Raphael's manner at his best. Whether the whirligig of time will bring about a revenge for the Eclectics yet remains to be seen. Taste is so capricious, or rather the conditions which create taste are so complex and inscrutable, that even this, which now seems impossible, may happen in the future. But a modest prediction can be hazarded that nothing short of the substitution of Catholicism for science and of Jesuitry for truth in the European mind will work a general revolution in their favour.

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

The Main Events of European History—Italy in the Renaissance—Germany and Reformation—Catholic Reaction—Its Antagonism to Renaissance and Reformation—Profound Identity of Renaissance and Reformation—Place of Italy in European Civilisation—Want of Sympathy between Latin and Teutonic Races—Relation of Rome to Italy—Macaulay on the Roman Church—On Protestantism—Early Decline of Renaissance Enthusiasms—Italy's Present and Future.

I

The four main events of European history since the death of Christ are the decline of Græco-Roman civilisation, the triumph of Christianity as a new humanising agency, the intrusion of Teutonic and Slavonic tribes into the comity of nations, and the construction of the modern world of thought by Renaissance and Reformation.

As seems to be inevitable in the progress of our species, each of these changes involved losses, compensated by final gains; for humanity moves like a glacier, plastically, but with alternating phases of advance and retreat, obeying laws of fracture and regelation.

It would thus be easy to deplore the collapse of that mighty and beneficent organism which we call the Roman Empire. Yet without this collapse how could the Catholic Church have supplied inspiration to peoples gifted with fresh faculties, endowed with insight differing from that of Greeks and Romans?

It is tempting to lament the extinction of arts, letters, and

elaborated habits of civility, which followed the barbarian invasions. Yet without such extinction, how can we imagine to ourselves the growth of those new arts, original literatures, and varied modes of social culture, to which we give the names of medieval, chivalrous, or feudal ?

It is obvious that we can quarrel with the Renaissance for having put an end to purely Christian arts and letters by imposing a kind of pagan mannerism on the spontaneous products of the later medieval genius. But without this reversion to the remaining models of antique culture, how could the European races have become conscious of historical continuity ; how could the corrupt system of Papal domination have been broken by Reform ; how, finally, could Science, the vital principle of our present civilisation, have been evolved ?

In all these instances it appears that the old order must yield place to the new, not only because the new is destined to incorporate and supersede it, but also because the old has become unfruitful. Thus, the Roman Empire, having discharged its organising function, was decrepit, and classical civilisation, after exhibiting its strength in season, was decaying when the Latin priesthood and the barbarians entered that closed garden of antiquity, and trampled it beneath their feet. Medieval religion and modes of thought, in like manner, were at the point of ossifying, when Humanism intervened to twine the threads of past and present into strands that should be strong as cables for the furtherance of future energy.

It is incontestable that the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, each of them on different grounds antagonistic to the Renaissance, appear to have retarded that emancipation of the reason, begun by Humanism, which is still in progress. Nevertheless, the strife of Protestantism and Catholicism was needed for preserving moral and religious elements which

might have been too lightly dropped, and for working these into the staple of the modern consciousness. The process of the last three centuries, attended as it has been by serious drawbacks to the Spanish and Italian peoples, and by a lamentable waste of vigour to the Teutonic nations, has yet resulted in a permeation of the modern compost with the leaven of Christianity. Unchecked, it is probable that the Renaissance would have swept away much that was valuable and deserved to be permanent. Nor, without the flux and reflux of contending principles by which Europe was agitated in the Counter-Reformation period, could the equipoise of reciprocally attracting and repelling States, which constitutes the modern as different from the ancient or the medieval groundwork of political existence, have been so efficiently established.

II

Permanence and homogeneity are not to be predicated of 'anything that's merely ours and mortal.' We have missed the whole teaching of history if we wail aloud because Greek and Roman culture succumbed to barbarism, out of which medieval Christianity emerged; because the revival of learning diverted arts and letters in each Occidental nation from their home-ploughed channels; because Protestant theologians and Spanish Jesuits impeded that self-evolution of the reason which Italian humanists inaugurated. No less futile were it to waste declamatory tears upon the strife of absolutism with new-fledged democracy, or to vaticinate a reign of socialistic terror for the immediate future. We have to recognise that man cannot be other than what he makes himself; and he makes himself in obedience to immutable although unwritten laws, whereof he only of late years became dimly conscious. It is well, then, while reflecting on the lessons of some deeply studied epoch in world-history, to regard the developments

with which we have been specially occupied, no less than the ephemeral activity of each particular individual, as factors in a universal process, whereof none sees the issue, but which, willing or unwilling, each man helps to further. We shall then acknowledge that a contest between Conservatism and Liberalism, between established order and the order that is destined to replace it, between custom and innovation, constitutes the essence of vitality in human affairs. The nations by turns are protagonists in the drama of progress; by turns are doomed to play the part of obstructive agents. Intermingled in conflict which is active life, they contribute by their phases of declension and resistance, no less than by their forward movements, to the growth of an organism which shall probably in the far future be coextensive with the whole human race.

III

These considerations are suggested to us by the subject I have handled in this work. The first five volumes were devoted to showing how Italy, in the Renaissance, elaborated a new way of regarding man and the world, a new system of education, new social manners, and a new type of culture for herself and Europe. This was her pioneer's work in the period of transition from the Middle Ages; and while she was engaged in it, all classes, from popes and princes down to poetlings and pedants, seemed for a while to have lost sight of Catholic Christianity. They were equally indifferent to that corresponding and contemporary movement across the Alps, which is known as Reformation. They could not discern the close link of connexion which binds Renaissance to Reformation. Though at root identical in tendency towards freedom, these stirrings of the modern spirit assumed externally such diverse forms as made them reciprocally repellent. Only one European nation received both impulses

simultaneously. That was England, which adopted Protestantism and produced the literature of Spenser, Bacon, and Shakespeare at the same epoch. France, earlier than England, felt Renaissance influences, and for some while seemed upon the point of joining the Reformation. But while the French were hesitating, Spain proclaimed herself the uncompromising enemy of Protestantism, and Rome, supported by this powerful ally, dragged Italy into the Catholic reaction. That effort aimed at galvanising a decrepit Church into the semblance of vital energy, and, while professing the reformation of its corrupt system, stereotyped all that was antagonistic in its creed and customs to the spirit of the modern world. The Catholic Revival necessitated vigorous reaction, not only against Protestantism, but also against the Liberalism of the Renaissance and the political liberties of peoples. It triumphed throughout Southern Europe chiefly because France chose at length the Catholic side. But the triumph was only partial, condemning Spain and Italy indeed to intellectual barrenness for a season, but not sufficing to dominate and suppress the development of rationalism. The pioneer's work of Italy was over. She joined the ranks of obscurantists and obstructives. Germany, having failed to accomplish the Reformation in time, was distracted by the Catholic reaction, which plunged her into a series of disastrous wars. It remained for England and Holland, not, however, without similar perturbations in both countries, to lead the van of progress through two centuries; after which this foremost post was assigned to France and the United States.

IV

The views which I have maintained throughout my work upon the Renaissance will be found, I think, to be coherent. They have received such varied illustrations that it is difficult

to recapitulate the principles on which they rest, without repetition. The main outline of the argument, however, is as follows. During the Middle Ages, Western Christendom recognised, in theory at least, the ideal of European unity under the dual headship of the Papacy and Empire. There was one civil order and one Church. Emperor and Pope, though frequently at strife, were supposed to support each other for the common welfare of Christendom. That medieval conception has now, in the centuries which we call modern, passed into oblivion; and the period in which it ceased to have effective value we denote as the period of the Renaissance and the Reformation. So long as the ideal held good, it was possible for the Papacy to stamp out heresies and to stifle the earlier stirrings of antagonistic culture. Thus the precursory movements to which I alluded in the first chapter of my 'Age of the Despots,' seemed to be abortive; and no less apparently abortive were the reformatory efforts of Wiclif and Huss. Yet Europe was slowly undergoing mental and moral changes, which announced the advent of a new era. These changes were more apparent in Italy than elsewhere, through the revival of arts and letters early in the fourteenth century. Cimabue, Giotto, and the Pisani, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, set culture forward on fresh paths divergent from previous medieval tradition. The gradual enfeeblement of the Empire and the distraction of the Church during the Great Schism prepared the means whereby both Renaissance and Reformation were eventually realised. The Council of Constance brought the Western nations into active diplomatical relations, and sowed seeds of thought which afterwards sprang up in Luther.

Meanwhile a special nidus had been created in the South. The Italian communes freed themselves from all but titular subjection to the Empire, and were practically independent of the Papacy during its exile in Avignon. They succumbed to

despots, and from Italian despotism emerged the Machiavellian conception of the State. This conception, modified in various ways, by Sarpi's theory of Church and State, by the Jesuit theory of Papal Supremacy, by the counter-theory of the Divine Right of Kings, by theories of Social Contract and the Divine Right of Nations, superseded the elder ideal of Universal Monarchy. It grew originally out of the specific conditions of Italy in the fifteenth century, and acquired force from that habit of mind, fostered by the Classical Revival, which we call humanism. Humanism had flourished in Italy since the days of Petrarch, and had been communicated by Italian teachers to the rest of Europe. As in the South it generated the new learning and the new culture which I have described in the first five volumes of this work, and acted as a solvent on the medieval idea of the Empire, so in the North it generated a new religious enthusiasm and acted as a solvent on the medieval idea of the Church. All through the Middle Ages, nothing seemed more formidable to the European mind than heresy. Any sacrifices were willingly made in order to secure the unity of the Catholic Communion. But now, by the Protestant rebellion, that spell was broken, and the right of peoples to choose their faith, in dissent from a Church declared corrupt, was loudly proclaimed.

So long as we keep this line of reasoning in view, we shall recognise why it is not only uncritical, but also impossible, to separate the two movements severally called Renaissance and Reformation. Both had a common root in humanism, and humanism owed its existence on the one hand to the recovery of antique literature, on the other to the fact that the Papacy, instead of striving to stamp it out as it had stamped out Provençal civilisation, viewed it at first with approval. The new learning, as our ancestors were wont to call it, involved, in Michelet's pregnant formula, the discovery of the world and man, and developed a spirit of revolt against

medievalism in all its manifestations. Its fruits were speedily discerned in bold exploratory studies, sound methods of criticism, audacious speculation, and the free play of the intellect over every field of knowledge. This new learning had time and opportunity for full development in Italy, and for adequate extension to the Northern races, before its real tendencies were suspected. When that happened, the transition from the medieval to the modern age had been secured. The Empire was obsolete. The Church was forced into reaction. Europe became the battlefield of progressive and retrogressive forces, the scene of a struggle between two parties which can best be termed Liberalism and Conservatism.

Stripping the subject of those artistic and literary associations which we are accustomed to connect with the word Renaissance, these seem to me the most essential points to bear in mind about this movement. Then, when we have studied the diverse antecedent circumstances of the German and Italian races, when we take into account their national qualities, and estimate the different aims and divergent enthusiasms evoked in each by humanistic ardour, we shall perceive how it came to pass that Renaissance and Reformation clashed together in discordant opposition to the Catholic Revival.

V

Italy, through the Roman Republic, the Roman Empire, and the Roman Church, gave discipline, culture, and religion to the Western world. But, during the course of this civilising process, a force arose in Northern Europe which was destined to transfer the centre of gravity from the Mediterranean basin northwards. The Teutonic tribes effaced the Western Empire, adopted Christianity, and profoundly modified what still survived of Latin civility among the Occidental races. A new factor was thus introduced into the

European community, which had to be assimilated to the old; and the genius of the Italian people never displayed itself more luminously than in the ability with which the Bishops of Rome availed themselves of this occasion. They separated the Latin from the Greek Church, and, by the figment of the Holy Roman Empire, cemented Southern and Northern Europe into an apparently cohesive whole. After the year A.D. 800 Europe, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, acknowledged a dual headship; Papacy and Empire ranking as ideals under which the unity of Christendom subsisted in a multiplicity of separate and self-evolving nations.

The concordat between Latin Church and German Empire, the one representing traditions of antique intelligence and Southern habits of State organisation, the other introducing the young energies of half-cultivated peoples and the chivalry of the North, was never perfect. Yet, incomplete as the fusion between Roman and Teuton actually was, it had a common basis in religion, and it enabled the federated peoples to maintain recognised international relations. What we now call Renaissance and Reformation revealed still unreconciled antagonisms between Southern and Northern, Latin and German, factors in this medieval Europe. Italy, freed for a while from both Papacy and Empire, expressed her intellectual energy in the Revival of Learning, developing that bold investigating spirit to which the names of Humanism or of Rationalism may be given. The new learning, the new enthusiasm for inquiry, the new study of the world and man, as subjects of vital interest irrespective of our dreamed-of life beyond the grave, stimulated in Italy what we know as Renaissance; while in Germany it led to what we know as Reformation. The Reformation must be regarded as the Teutonic counterpart to the Italian Renaissance. It was what emerged from the core of

that huge barbarian factor, which had sapped the Roman Empire, and accepted Catholicism, which lent its vigour to the medieval Empire, and which now participated in the culture of the classical Revival. As Italy restored freedom to human intelligence and the senses by arts and letters and amenities of refined existence, so Germany restored freedom to the soul and conscience by strenuous efforts after religious sincerity and political independence. The one people aiming at a restoration of pagan civility beneath the shadow of Catholicism, the other seeking after a purer Christianity in antagonism to the Papal hierarchy, initiated from opposite points of view that complete emancipation of the modern mind which has not yet been fully realised.

If we inquire why the final end to which both Renaissance and Reformation tended—namely, the liberation of the spirit from medieval prepossessions and impediments—has not been more perfectly attained, we find the cause of this partial failure in the contradictory conceptions formed by South and North of a problem which was at root one. Both Renaissance and Reformation had their origin in the revival of learning, or rather in that humanistic enthusiasm which was its vital essence. But the race-differences involved in these two movements were so irreconcilable, the objects pursued were so divergent, that Renaissance and Reformation came into the conflict of chemical combination, producing a ferment out of which the intellectual unity of Europe has not as yet clearly emerged. The Latin race, having created a new learning and a new culture, found itself at strife with the Teutonic race, which at the same period developed new religious conceptions and new political energies.

The Church supplied a battlefield for these hostilities. The Renaissance was by no means favourable to the principles of Catholic orthodoxy; and the Italians showed themselves to be Christians by convention and tradition rather than by

conviction in the fifteenth century. Yet Italy was well content to let the corrupt hierarchy of Papal Rome subsist, provided Rome maintained the attitude which Leo X. had adopted toward the liberal spirit of the Classical Revival. The Reformation, on the other hand, was openly antagonistic to the Catholic Church. Protestantism repudiated the toleration professed by sceptical philosophers and indulgent free-thinkers in the South, while it repelled those refined persons by theological fervour and moral indignation which they could not comprehend. Thus the Italian and the German children of humanism failed to make common cause against Catholicism, with which the former felt no sympathy and which the latter vehemently attacked. Meanwhile the Church awoke to a sense of her peril. The Papacy was still a force of the first magnitude; and it only required a vigorous effort to place it once more in an attitude of domination and resistance. This effort it made by reforming the ecclesiastical hierarchy, defining Catholic dogma, and carrying on a war of extermination against the two-fold Liberalism of Renaissance and Reformation.

That reactionary movement against the progress of free thought which extinguished the Italian Renaissance and repelled the Reformation, has formed the subject of the two concluding volumes of this work. It could not have been conducted by the Court of Rome without the help of Spain. The Spanish nation, at this epoch paramount in Europe, declared itself fanatically and unanimously for the Catholic Revival. In Italy it lent the weight of arms and overlordship to the Church for the suppression of popular liberties. It provided the Papacy with a spiritual militia specially disciplined to meet the exigencies of the moment. Yet the centre of the reaction was still Rome; and the Spanish hegemony enabled the Roman hierarchy to consolidate an organism which has long survived its own influence in European affairs.

VI

After the close of the Great Schism Rome began to obey the national impulses of the Italians, entered into their confederation as one of the five leading powers, and assumed externally the humanistic culture then in vogue. But the Church was a cosmopolitan institution. Its interests extended beyond the Alps, beyond the Pyrenees, beyond the oceans traversed by Portuguese and Spanish navigators. The Renaissance so far modified its structure that the Papacy continued politically to rank as an Italian power. Its headquarters could not be removed from the Tiber, and by the tacit consent of Latin Catholicism the Supreme Pontiff was selected from Italian prelates. Yet now, in 1530, it began to play a new part more consonant with its medieval functions and pretensions. Rome indeed had ceased to be the imperial capital of Europe, where the secular head of Christendom assumed the crown of Empire from his peer the spiritual chieftain. The Eternal City in this new phase of modern history, which lasted until Vittorio Emmanuele's entrance into the Quirinal in 1870, gave the Pope a place among Catholic sovereigns. From his throne upon the seven hills he conducted with their approval and assistance the campaign of the Counter-Reformation. Instead of encouraging and developing what yet remained of Renaissance in Italy, instead of directing that movement of the self-emancipating mind beyond the stage of art and humanism into the stage of rationalism and science, the Church used its authority to bring back the Middle Ages and to repress national impulses. It made common cause with Spain for a common object—the maintenance of Italy in a state of political and intellectual bondage, and the subjugation of such provinces in Europe as had not been irretrievably lost to the Catholic cause. The Italians, as a nation, remained passive,

but not altogether unwilling or unapproving spectators of the drama which was being enacted under Papal leadership beyond their boundaries. Once again their activity was merged in that of Rome—in the action of that State which had first secured for them the Empire of the habitable globe, and next the spiritual hegemony of the Western races, and from the predominance of which they had partially disengaged themselves during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It was the Papacy's sense of its own danger as a cosmopolitan institution, combined with the crushing superiority of Spain in the peninsula, which determined this phase of Italian history.

The Catholic Revival, like the Renaissance, may in a certain sense be viewed as a product of Italian genius. This is sufficiently proved by the diplomatic history of the Tridentine Council, and by the dedication of the Jesuits to Papal service. It must, however, be remembered that while the Renaissance emanated from the race at large, from its confederation of independent republics and tyrannies, the Catholic Revival emanated from that portion of the race which is called Rome, from the ecclesiastical hierarchy imbued with world-wide ambitions in which national interests were drowned. There is nothing more interesting to the biographer of the Italians than the complicated correlation in which they have always stood to the cosmopolitan organism of Rome, itself Italian. In their antique days of greatness Rome subdued them, and by their native legions won the overlordship of the world. After the downfall of the Empire the Church continued Roman traditions in an altered form, but it found itself unable to dispense with the foreign assistance of Franks and Germans. The price now paid by Italy for spiritual headship in Europe was subjection to Teutonic suzerains and perpetual intriguing interference in her affairs. During the Avignonian captivity and the Great Schism, Italy developed intellectual and confederative unity, imposing her laws of

culture and of statecraft even on the Papacy when it returned to Rome. But again at the close of the Renaissance, when Italian independence had collapsed, the Church aspired to spiritual supremacy; and at this epoch she recompensed her Spanish ally by aiding and abetting in the enslavement of the peninsula. Still the Roman Pontiff, who acted as generalissimo of the Catholic armies throughout Europe, was now more than ever recognised as an Italian power.

VII

In his review of Ranke's 'History of the Popes' Lord Macaulay insists with brilliant eloquence upon the marvellous vitality and longevity of the Roman Catholic Church. He describes the insurrection of the intellect against her rule in Provence, and her triumph in the Crusade which sacrificed a nation to the conception of medieval religious unity. He dwells on her humiliation in exile at Avignon, her enfeeblement during the Great Schism, and her restoration to splendour and power at the close of the Councils. Then he devotes his vast accumulated stores of learning and his force of rhetoric to explain the Reformation, the Catholic Revival, and the Counter-Reformation. He proves abundantly what there was in the organism of the Catholic Church and in the temper of Papal Rome, which made these now reactionary powers more than a match for Protestantism. 'In fifty years from the day on which Luther publicly renounced communion with the Papacy, and burned the bull of Leo before the gates of Wittenberg, Protestantism attained its highest ascendency, an ascendency which it soon lost, and which it never regained.' This sentence forms the theme for Lord Macaulay's survey of the Catholic Revival. Dazzling and fascinating as that survey is, it fails through misconception of one all-important point. Lord Macaulay takes for granted that conflict in

Europe, since the publication of Luther's manifesto against Rome, has been between Catholicism and Protestantism. Even after describing the cataclysm of the French Revolution, he winds up his argument with these words: 'We think it a most remarkable fact that no Christian nation, which did not adopt the principles of the Reformation before the end of the sixteenth century, should ever have adopted them. Catholic communities have, since that time, become infidel and Catholic again; but none has become Protestant.' This is tantamount to regarding Protestantism as something fixed and final in itself, as a permanent and necessary form of Christianity. Here lies the fallacy which makes his reasoning, in spite of all its eloquence, but superficial. Protestantism, in truth, has never been more than a half-way house or halting-place between Catholicism and what may variously be described as free thought or science or rationalism. Being in its origin critical—being, as its name implies, a protest and an opposition—Protestantism was doomed to sterility, whenever it hardened into one or other of its dogmatic forms. As critics and insurgents, Luther and Calvin rank among the liberators of the modern intellect. As founders of intolerant and mutually hostile Christian sects, Luther and Calvin rank among the retarders of modern civilisation. Among subsequent thinkers of whom both sects have disapproved, we may recognise the veritable continuators of their work in its best aspect. The Lutheran and Calvinist Churches are but backwaters and stagnant pools, left behind by the subsidence of rivers in flood, separated from the tidal stress of cosmic forces. Macaulay's misconception of the true character of Protestantism, which is to Catholicism what the several dissenting bodies are to the English Establishment, has diverted his attention from the deeper issues involved in the Counter-Reformation. He hardly touches upon Rome's persecution of free thought, upon her obstinate opposition to science.

Consequently, he is not sufficiently aware that Copernicus and Bruno were, even in the sixteenth century, far more dangerous foes to Catholicism than were the leaders of the Reformed Churches. Copernicus and Bruno, the lineal ancestors of Helmholtz and Darwin, headed that opposition to Catholicism which has been continuous and potent to the present day, which has never retreated into backwaters or stagnated in slumbrous pools. From this opposition the essence of Christianity, the spirit which Christ bequeathed to his disciples, has nothing to fear. But Catholicism and Protestantism alike, in so far as both are dogmatic and reactionary, clinging to creeds which will not bear the test of scientific investigation, to myths which have lost their significance in the light of advancing knowledge, and to methods of interpreting the Scriptures at variance with the canons of historical criticism, have very much to fear from this opposition. Lord Macaulay thinks it a most remarkable fact that no Christian nation has adopted the principles of the Reformation since the end of the sixteenth century. He does not perceive that, in every race of Europe, all enlightened thinkers, whether we name Bacon or Descartes, Spinoza or Leibnitz, Goethe or Mazzini, have adopted and carried forward those principles in their essence. That they have not proclaimed themselves Protestants unless they happened to be born Protestants, ought not to arouse his wonder, any more than that Washington and Heine did not proclaim themselves Whigs. For Protestantism, when it became dogmatic and stereotyped itself in sects, ceased to hold any vital relation to the forward movement of modern thought. The Reformation, in its origin, was, as I have tried to show, the Northern and Teutonic manifestation of that struggle after intellectual freedom, which in Italy and France had taken shape as Renaissance. But Calvinism, Lutheranism, Zwinglianism, and Anglicanism renounced that struggle only less decidedly

than Catholicism; and in some of their specific phases, in Puritanism for example, they showed themselves even more antagonistic to liberal culture and progressive thought than did the Roman Church.

Whatever may be thought about the future of Catholicism (and no prudent man will utter prophecies upon such matters), there can be no doubt that the universal mind of the Christian races, whether Catholic or Protestant, has been profoundly penetrated and permeated with rationalism, which, springing simultaneously in Reformation and Renaissance out of humanism, has supplied the spiritual life of the last four centuries. This has created science in all its branches. This has stimulated critical and historical curiosity. This has substituted sound for false methods of inquiry, the love of truth for attachment to venerable delusion. This has sustained the unconquerable soul of man in its persistent effort after liberty and its revolt against the tyranny of priests and princes. At present, civilisation seems threatened by more potent foes than the Roman Church, nor is it likely that these foes will seek a coalition with Catholicism.

As a final remark upon this topic, it should be pointed out that Protestantism, in spite of the shortcomings I have indicated, has, on the whole, been more favourable to intellectual progress than Catholicism. For Protestantism was never altogether oblivious of its origin in revolt against unjust spiritual domination, while Catholicism has steadily maintained its conservative attitude of self-defence by repression. This suffices to explain another point insisted on by Lord Macaulay—namely, that those nations in which Protestantism took root have steadily advanced, while the decay of Southern Europe can be mainly ascribed to the Catholic Revival. The one group of nations have made progress, not indeed because they were Protestants, but because they were more obedient to the Divine Mind, more in sympathy with

the vital principle of movement, more open to rationalism. The other group of nations have declined, because Catholicism, after the year 1530, wilfully separated itself from truth and liberty and living force, and obstinately persisted in serving the false deities of an antiquated religion.

VIII

Few periods in history illustrate the law of reaction and retrogression, to which all processes of civil progress are subject, more plainly and more sadly than the one with which I have been dealing in these volumes. The Renaissance in Italy started with the fascination of a golden dream; and like the music of a dream, it floated over Europe. But the force which had stimulated humanity to this delightful reawakening of senses and intelligence, stirred also the slumbering religious conscience, and a yearning after personal emancipation. Protestantism arose like a stern reality, plunging the nations into confused and deadly conflict, arousing antagonisms in established orders, unleashing cupidities and passions which had lurked within the breasts of manifold adventurers. The fifteenth century closed to a solemn symphony. After the middle of the sixteenth, discord sounded from every quarter of the Occidental world. Italy lay trampled on and dying. Spain reared her dragon's crest of menacing ambition and remorseless fanaticism. France was torn by factions and devoured by vicious favourites of corrupt kings. Germany heaved like a huge ocean in the grip of a tumultuous gyrating cyclone. England passed through a complex revolution, the issue of which, under the sway of three Tudor monarchs, appeared undecided, until the fourth by happy fate secured the future of her people. It is not to be wondered that, in these circumstances, a mournful discouragement should have descended on the age; that men should have become more

dubitative; that arts and letters should have seemed to pine upon unfertile ground. The nutriment they needed was absorbed by plants of fiercer and ranker growth, religious hatreds, political greeds, relentless passions burning in the hearts of princes and of populations.

IX

Italy had already given so much of mental and social civilisation to Europe, that her quiescence at this epoch can scarcely supply a substantial theme for rhetorical lamentations. Marino and Guido Reni prove that the richer veins of Renaissance art and poetry had been worked out. The lives of Aldus the younger and Muretus show that humanism was well-nigh exhausted on its native soil. This will not, however, prevent us from deploring the untimely frost cast by persecution on Italy's budding boughs of knowledge. While we rejoice in Galileo, we must needs shed tears of fiery wrath over the passion of Campanella and the stake of Bruno. Meanwhile the tree of genius was ever green and vital in that Saturnian land of culture. Poetry, painting, sculpture, and architecture, having borne their flowers and fruits, retired to rest. Scholarship faded; science was nipped in its unfolding season by unkindly influences. But music put forth lusty shoots and flourished, yielding a new paradise of harmless joy, which even priests could grudge not to the world, and which lulled tyranny to sleep with silvery numbers.

Thanks be to God that I who pen these pages, and that you who read them, have before us in this year of grace the spectacle of a resuscitated Italy! In this last quarter of the nineteenth century, the work of her heroes, Vittorio Emmanuele, Mazzini, Garibaldi, and Cavour stands firmly founded. The creation of united Italy, that latest birth of the Italian genius, that most impossible of dreamed-of triumphs through

long ages of her glory and greatness, compensates for all that she has borne in these three hundred years. Now that Rome is no longer the seat of a cosmopolitan theocracy, but the capital of a regenerated people; now that Venice joins hands with Genoa, forgetful of Curzola and Chioggia; now that Florence and Pisa and Siena stand like sisters on the sacred Tuscan soil, while Milan has no strife with Naples, and the Alps and sea-waves gird one harmony of cities who have drowned their ancient spites in amity,—the student of the splendid and the bitter past may pause and bow his head in gratitude to Heaven and swear that, after all, all things are well.

X

There is no finality in human history. It is folly to believe that any religions, any social orders, any scientific hypotheses, are more than provisional, and partially possessed of truth. Let us assume that the whole curve of human existence on this planet describes a parabola of some twenty millions of years in duration.[1] Of this we have already exhausted unreckoned centuries in the evolution of prehistoric man, and perhaps five thousand years in the ages of historic records. How much of time remains in front? Through that past period of five thousand years preserved for purblind retrospect in records, what changes of opinion, what peripeties of empire, may we not observe and ponder! How many theologies, cosmological conceptions, polities, moralities, dominions, ways of living and of looking upon life, have followed one upon another! The space itself is brief; compared with the incalculable longevity of the globe, it is but a bare 'scape in oblivion.' And, however ephemeral the persistence of humanity may be in this its earthly dwelling-place, the conscious past sinks into insignificance before those æons of

[1] Twenty millions of years is of course a mere symbol, x or y.

the conscious future, those on-coming and out-rolling waves of further evolution which bear posterity forward. Has any solid gain of man been lost on the stream of time to us-ward? We doubt that. Has anything final and conclusive been arrived at? We doubt that also. The river broadens, as it bears us on. But the rills from which it gathered, and the ocean whereto it tends, are now, as ever in the past, inscrutable. It is therefore futile to suppose, at this short stage upon our journey, while the infant founts of knowledge are still murmuring to our ears, that any form of faith or science has been attained as permanent; that any Pillars of Hercules have been set up against the Atlantic Ocean of experience and exploration. Think of that curve of possibly twenty million years, and of the five thousand years remembered by humanity! How much, how incalculably much longer is the space to be traversed than that which we have left behind! It seems, therefore, our truest, as it is our humblest, wisdom to live by faith and love. 'And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.' Love is the greatest; and against love man has sinned most in the short but blood-bedabbled annals of his past. Hope is the virtue from which a faithful human being can best afford to abstain, unless hope wait as patient handmaid upon faith. Faith is the steadying and sustaining force, holding fast by which each one of us dares defy change, and gaze with eyes of curious contemplation on the tide which brought us, and is carrying, and will bear us where we see not. 'I know not how I came of you and I know not where I go with you; but I know I came well and I shall go well.' Man can do no better than live in Eternity's Sunrise, as Blake put it. To live in the eternal sunrise of God's presence, ever rising, not yet risen, which will never reach its meridian on this globe, seems to be the destiny, as it should also be the blessing, of mankind.

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